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An Illuminative Evaluation into how a post-16 setting
accesses and uses the voices of learners with EHCPs to inform
their Annual Review

Pauline Cooper

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements for the award of the degree of Educational Psychology in the Faculty of Policy Studies, September 2019.

Word Count: 45,951

Abstract

This study is an Illuminative Evaluation exploring how a college in the South West of England elicits and uses the voice of learners with EHCPs in the Annual Review (AR) process.

The inclusion of young people's voices for the support of their Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is a statutory requirement of legislation (DfE/DoH, 2015) and educational settings and local authorities must review young people's Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) annually. SEND support was extended to include young people up to 25 years of age, opening up a new domain of practice for both education providers and Educational Psychology.

Issues of authenticity and variances in the use of young people's voice in practice are rooted in the complex social, cultural and political interactions of the context. Despite theoretical and empirical support, the gap between policy and practice continues.

To explore how one college implemented the legislative requirements, the social-constructivist and collaborative methodological approach, Illuminative Evaluation, was chosen. Four learners with EHCPs, their four learning support workers and their three learning support co-ordinators were interviewed. This was combined with observations of the AR meetings and analysis of college documentation to provide a rich and thorough understanding of the college's processes. Findings were presented to the college to allow for the joint development of next steps.

The study found that for learners to be effectively included in ARs, a set of enabling conditions at national, local authority and college level are needed. Greater guidance and standardisation for SEND processes are needed and LAs must have the resources required to fulfil statutory duties. Within college, learners need greater choice, preparation and feedback on any actions following the meeting. The role of the learning support worker for supporting learners' engagement is also discussed. Person-Centered Planning is referenced with regards to the development of an agreed and consistent approach. Recommendations and a suggested model for the set of enabling conditions is provided.

Suggestions for further research include the complex role of the parent in the support of learners aged 16 – 25, and the issues of multi-agency working for post-16 settings.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to extend a special thank you to my thesis supervisor, Dr John Franey, who has kept me going and given me invaluable supervision. The stressful moments of this thesis may one day become, as you quoted, *"tears in rain"*, but your words of wisdom, encouragement and support will not.

Secondly, I would like to give huge thanks to Dr Rob Green for all his support throughout this course, particularly in the first year. Thank you to all of the Educational Psychology tutors at Bristol University for your inspiring and supportive teaching, and for making the course the most perspective changing, incredible experience.

Thirdly, I am humbled and forever grateful to the learners and the staff at the college who were so kind and generous with their time and for putting up with my endless number of questions. I wish the learners all the best with their college courses and their futures.

My thanks also go to everyone in the Educational Psychology Service of my training placement for all the words of encouragement and advice. In particular, I would like to thank my placement supervisors, Dr Katie Pitman and Dr Sadie Westrup, for your excellent supervision and your support during my emotional and energy depleted times.

A massive thank you goes to my incredibly supportive and amazing friends who have put up with my generally non-committal and unavailable ways during the course. The last three years have been challenging for many reasons and you have always been there for me. I cannot express how much you all mean to me. Included with my friends are my fellow trainees on the Bristol University Educational Psychology course. I am so lucky and honoured to have met you and to have trained with such an inspiring, witty and supportive group of people.

Last, but absolutely not least, I would like to thank my wonderful and loving family. My nieces, Isabella and Emilia, you have simultaneously buoyed and grounded me with your love, hugs and playfulness, even at my most exhausted moments. May your voices always be heard. Simon and Belinda, I thank you so much and am forever grateful for everything you have done for me, in the last three years and before that, which has got me to where I am today.

Mum and Dad, you have always supported and encouraged me no matter what it was I wanted to do and I cannot tell you how much it has meant to me. From proof reading to car washing to phone calls and hugs, you are always there for me. I thank you with all my heart for all your support, love and acceptance.

Dedicated to my Nan with love.

A true lady with a passion for learning and life.

Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED.....DATE.....

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview

This dissertation aims to explore how the voices of learners with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) are accessed, heard and used to inform their Annual Review (AR) meetings in a post-16 setting.

Accessing young people's voices is part of national and international legislation (UNCRC 1989; Children and Families Act 2014; DfE/DoH, 2015). Psychological theory, literature and research (Rogers, 1967; Deci and Ryan, 1985; Hart, 1992; Rudduck, 2006; Carroll and Dockrell, 2012; Rome, Hardy, Richardson and Shenton, 2015; Kubiak, 2017) supports the benefits of doing so, but concerns have been raised regarding the authenticity and impact (Hart, 1992; Fielding, 2001; Ware, 2004; Whitty and Wisby, 2007; Ingram, 2013; Hall, 2017).

It is hoped that by exploring the policies, processes and lived experiences of learners and professionals through the use of Illuminative Evaluation (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Stake, 1976; Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington, 1977; Burden, 2008), a thorough understanding of the reality of ARs in a post-16 setting will be gained. The intention is to use this insight to support the college in identifying potential areas for development.

Although this is a small-scale study of 11 participants and the findings are within one particular college in the South West of England, the likely similarities of this setting to other post-16 settings in the UK suggests a level of relevance may be found, and other practitioners and professionals may well benefit from the findings.

1.2 Significance of the topic

The importance of seeking young people's views to inform their support is a statutory obligation. The UNCRC (1989) stated that young people have the right to have their voices heard when making decisions about their lives and these sentiments became the underpinnings of the Children and Families Act (2014) and the new Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 - 25 (SEND Code of Practice; DfE/DoH, 2015). The reforms for SEND were highly significant for professionals working within education, not least for Educational Psychologists. The extension to 25 years of age has been described as: "the most significant development the profession has ever experienced" (Atkinson, Dunsmuir, Lang and Wright, 2015, p.159).

The changes impacted professionals and practitioners on an individual and interactional level. They placed statutory duties on colleges, universities and private and voluntary sectors (DfE/DoH, 2015).

For EPs, not only did they need to develop their assessment and consultation approaches to fit this older cohort of learners and support them with preparing for adulthood, but they would also need to consult with practitioners who were potentially new to SEND processes and unfamiliar with EP involvement (Atkinson, Dunsmuir, Lang and Wright, 2015).

Despite practitioners' passion and commitment to the voices of young people (Maher and Vickerman, 2017), variances in practice have been found (Norwich and Kelly et al., 2006) and the reforms have presented many challenges for professionals (Boesley and Crane, 2018; Palikara, Castro, Gaona and Eirinaki, 2019). The rhetoric gap between policy and practice and the complexities of including young people's voices means there is a need for further understanding of the effective processes and practices for its authentic use.

Lastly, the recency of the reforms means that research on the voice of young people aged 16 – 25 years and in relation to the Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015) is still in its infancy. In particular, the systematic literature review for this dissertation revealed a gap in knowledge on how the voices of young people in post-16 educational settings are elicited and used to inform their ARs.

1.3 Personal and professional motivations

During the first year of my training on the Educational Psychology course, I worked with a Year 8 student who had social and emotional difficulties and the school was struggling to gain her views and know how best to support her. From our first meeting, it was clear I would have to prove my worth in terms of listening to her without judgement and acting on the suggestions she made. By doing this, I became a channel for her to communicate with school. Every detail of her support was checked with her, down to the use of first or third person in the recommendations for her teachers.

This experience and the progress she made demonstrated to me the real impact and power of allowing a young person to take the lead on their support and sparked my interest in how this can be achieved in all areas of a young person's support.

A final thought relates to my own reflections on my ability throughout my life to voice my true thoughts and feelings, and the skills, confidence and support I have needed to do it. It is a skill I continue to develop, and the many positives I have experienced as a result have been part of the motivations for this thesis.

1.4 Aims and research questions

The aim of this thesis is to illuminate the processes and practices of a post-16 setting for eliciting and using the learners' (with EHCPs) voices for their Annual Reviews. The intention is to develop a set of recommendations and an illustrative model which the college and others can use.

The research questions are:

- 1) What are learners' (with EHCPs) perceptions and experiences of the annual review process?
- 2) How do learning support workers elicit and use the learner's voice to inform the Annual Review process?
- 3) How do learning support co-ordinators elicit and use the learner's voice to inform the Annual Review process?
- 4) How might the college develop its processes for eliciting and using learners' voices to inform the Annual Review process?

1.5 Research setting

The research took place in a sixth form college in the South West of England. The college has four main sites and two additional teaching sites at a local art museum and zoological centre. The two largest campuses have specific departments for learners with SEND. The departments provide courses which prepare the learners for work and life. Greater detail on the college is provided in Chapter 3: Methodology (3.5.1; Learning Milieu).

1.6 Methodology and Epistemological stance

The methodological approach of this study is Illuminative Evaluation (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Stake, 1976; Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington, 1977; Burden, 2008). It was chosen due to its acknowledgement of the social constructivist and interpretative nature of this thesis and its recognition for evaluating processes within their unique contexts.

Illuminative Evaluation is based on the following assumptions:

- anti-positivist in its orientation
- thoroughly context bound
- multi-faceted in its perspectives
- illustrative of the mismatch that occurs between the rhetoric and action
- concerned with revealing a recognised and recognisable reality

(Burden, 2008, p. 224)

Parlett and Hamilton (1972) introduced Illuminative Evaluation as a reaction to previous forms of evaluation for education programmes which they claimed were 'positivist' and assumed an 'objective truth' (Greig, Taylor and MacKay, 2008).

Illuminative Evaluation adopts a 'constructivist' epistemology which recognises that a person is part of a complex social network and reality is created between that person and their interactions with

others (Greig, Taylor and MacKay, 2008; Burden, 2008). It argues against the notion of being able to find a 'one size fits all' with regards to the outcome of any educational intervention or programme.

Illuminative Evaluation is relevant for this study for several reasons:

- The study aims to investigate the processes and practices adopted within a post-16 setting for the ARs of learners' EHCPs. The reality of how this legislative process is implemented is thoroughly context bound.
- The profession of Educational Psychology is increasingly adopting consultative practices (Wagner, 1995, 2000; Dickinson, 2000; Kelly, Woolfson, and Boyle, 2008; Nolan and Moreland, 2014). The collaborative approach of Illuminative Evaluation is in-line with these values and practices.

By adopting the '5-stage' approach of the methodology (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972), interviews with learners with EHCPs and key people involved in the AR processes (learning support workers and learning support co-ordinators) will be carried out; their AR meetings will be observed; and college documentation will be analysed.

Using this thorough approach, I intend to present a 'recognisable reality' (Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington, 1977, p. 234) of the AR process to the college and support them in identifying potential areas to develop.

1.7 Definitions and terminology

In order to ensure coherence and a collective understanding of the information presented in this thesis, the next section will provide an overview of the key terms used and their definition.

- **Young people:** As per the Children and Families Act (2014), the term 'children' includes those up to 15 years of age and 'young people' refers to the ages 16 – 25. Predominantly, 'young people' will be used within this dissertation as I perceive this to be more encompassing for all age ranges.
- **Learner:** Learner refers to any young person within an educational setting, and more specifically, to the young people within the college of this study. Early discussions with the SENCo revealed that the college prefers to use this term because it is more inclusive of every type of 'learner' at the college, regardless of their age or the type of course they are on.
- **Voice of the learner:** Cameron and Monsen (2005) defined 'views' as "beliefs, attitudes and self or social identity in relation to the identified problems" (p.296). The NUS (2015) defined learner voice as: "Any activities that promote feedback, representation and/or engagement with both content and delivery of education by learners" (p.8). In this dissertation, 'voice of

the learner' will be used to include both the opportunities young people have to identify and express their views and their ability to take part in decision-making which affects them.

- **Illuminative Evaluation:** The methodology has been referred to in literature as both 'Illuminative Evaluation' and 'Illuminative Research' (Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington, 1977). The term 'evaluation' will be used within this study to reflect the definition proposed by Parlett (1981, p. 221), which is "the study of an organization or curriculum in such a way that contributes to decision-making and review of policy".
- **Educational Health Care Plans (EHCPs):** An EHCP is a legal document which states the strengths and difficulties of a young person and outlines the support which they require within education, health and social care domains (DfE/DoH, 2015).
- **Annual Review (AR):** The AR is a statutory process for reviewing a young person's current needs and the outcomes and actions on their EHCP.
- **Learning support worker (LSW):** Similar titles used for the role of the LSW include 'teaching assistants' and 'learning support assistants' (Blatchford, Russell, Bassett, Brown and Martin (2007). Within the college, the term 'learning support worker' or 'LSW' is used. Their responsibilities include supporting the teaching, learning and progress of the learners.
- **Learning support co-ordinator (LS Co-od):** The learning support co-ordinators (LS Co-ods) are members of staff with the responsibility of co-ordinating SEND processes such as the ARs and management of the LSWs. Many of the LS Co-ods roles and responsibilities were similar to those of a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo; see Section 2.10.1)

1.8 Chapter summary

This chapter has introduced the thesis by presenting an overview of the aims, rationale, importance of the topic and personal motivations for the study. It has included a description of the methodological approach which will be used for the study, including the reasons for its use in relation to the research aims and the epistemological stance of this dissertation. Finally, the definitions of key words and terms used throughout this thesis have been provided.

The following chapter will provide a review of the pertinent literature related to this thesis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 outlined how legislative changes to SEND included a greater emphasis on the use of young people's voices, introduced statutory Annual Reviews (ARs), and extended the age range up to 25 years (DfE/DoH, 2015). Consequently, post-16 colleges have been required to develop their practices. This dissertation aims to illuminate one college's processes for eliciting and using the voices of the learners with SEND to inform their AR meetings. The following chapter will provide a fuller account of the legislation along with the underpinning psychological theories relevant to the study. Research into the use of young people's voices will also be explored.

This literature review will be structured using the following headings:

- The Literature search
- The Legislative context
- Psychological theories: Self Actualisation, Self-Determination and Eco-systemic Theory
- Learner's voice: Participation
- Learner's voice: Informing Practice
- Learner's voice: Consultation
- Person-Centred Planning
- The Role of the learning support worker
- The Role of the learning support co-ordinator/SENCo
- Summary of the Literature Review

Throughout the chapter, 'parents and carers' will be addressed as 'parents'.

2.2 The Literature search

Preliminary readings on the use of children and young people's voices in general and the legislation began in September 2017 using the University of Bristol's Library search.

The systematic search began in August 2018 using the following databases: University of Bristol's Advanced Search; British Education Index; Child Development and Adolescent studies; Education Resource Information Centre (ERIC); Teacher Referencing Centre and PsychINFO. Table 1 presents the search terms used in the multiple field searches for these databases. Google Scholar was used for additional searches.

	Search terms
1	Post 16 OR College OR "Further education" OR "16 – 19" OR "16 – 25"
2	Perception OR view OR experience OR "student voice" OR "pupil voice" OR voice OR perspective OR decision-making
3	support plan OR individual education plan OR "learner centred plan OR person-centred plan OR Statement OR "Statement of education" OR "Statement of educational need" OR "annual review"
4	EHCP OR "Education Health and Care Plan"
5	Special needs OR special education OR disabilities
6	Person centre* plan

TABLE 1: SEARCH TERMS FOR POST-16, VOICE, EHCP AND PERSON CENTRED PLANNING

Limitations were placed on the searches:

- Dates: research between 2001 and 2018/2019
- Language: English
- Academic journals and peer reviewed journals

The dates were selected to reflect the period of change from the old legislation (The Special Educational Needs Act 2001, DfES, 2001) to the new Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015). Further limitations were added within the British Education Index searches (higher and college education, students and Great Britain). Relevant articles were saved and further reduced to include studies in the United Kingdom only.

The same databases were used for further searches on ‘person-centred planning’ using the following terms:

	Search Terms
1	Post 16 OR College OR “Further education” OR “16 – 19” OR “16 – 25” OR “young people” OR “young person” OR students OR adolescen* OR 16+ OR “16+ provision”
5	Special needs OR special education OR disabilities
7	Annual review
8	“Person centred planning” OR “Person centered planning” OR “Person centred reviews” OR “Person centre* reviews” OR “Person centred” OR “person centered”

TABLE 2: SEARCH TERMS FOR POST-16, ANNUAL REVIEWS AND PERSON CENTRED PLANNING

Additional systematic searches were carried out for the roles of the learning support worker (LSW) and learning support co-ordinator (LS Co-od). The term ‘SENCo’ was included as it encompasses the role of the LS Co-od, as explained later in this chapter: ‘2.9 The role of the learning support co-ordinator/SENCo’. The search focused on the roles within post-16 settings but papers which provided additional context and understanding were included. Tables 3 and 4 depict the search terms used.

	Search Terms
1	Post 16 OR College OR “Further education” OR “16 – 19” OR “16 – 25”
9	Learning Support Worker OR Learning Support Assistant OR Teaching Assistant OR Support Staff

TABLE 3: SEARCH TERMS FOR POST-16 AND LEARNING SUPPORT WORKER

	Search Terms
1	Post 16 OR College OR “Further education” OR “16 – 19” OR “16 – 25”
10	Learning Support Co-ordinator OR Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator OR SENCo OR Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator OR SENDCo

TABLE 4: SEARCH TERMS FOR POST-16 AND LEARNING SUPPORT CO-ORDINATOR

An additional search for ‘consultation’ was carried out as a result of the data analysis. The same databases and limitations were applied. The search terms used are recorded in Table 5:

	Search Terms
1	Post 16 OR College OR “Further education” OR “16 – 19” OR “16 – 25”
11	Consultation OR Consulting OR consult

TABLE 5: SEARCH TERMS FOR POST-16 AND CONSULTATION

As Wohlin (2014) describes, ‘snowballing’ is a valid approach for literature searches and was used in this study. Papers were found through wider reading required for the Educational Psychology course and through the systematic search.

The relevant legislation and psychological theories for this study will now be presented, followed by a review of the research and literature on this topic.

2.3 The Legislative context

2.3.1 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC; 1989)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC; 1989) stated that:

States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

(UNCRC, Article 12, p.5)

This pivotal piece of international legislation gave new rights to children and young people¹, including for ‘*administrative proceedings*’, and was ratified in the UK in 1991 (DoE, 2010). The Children Act (1989) additionally gave rights to young people regarding their views and any decisions affecting them (Section 17: 4A). Since these regulations, legislation and policy have continued to build on these principles.

¹ ‘Children’ within the UNCRC (1989) document are identified as being anyone up to the age of 18.

2.3.2 Children and Families Act (2014)

The Children and Families Act (2014) was a major reform of the legal duties and procedures for young people. Part 3 states the underpinning principles which Local Authorities (LAs) must follow when supporting young people with SEND:

- (a) the views, wishes and feelings of the child and his or her parent, or the young person;
- (b) the importance of the child and his or her parents, or the young person, participating as fully as possible in decisions relating to the exercise of the function concerned;
- (c) the importance of the child and his or her parent, or the young person, being provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation in those decisions.

(Children and Families Act, 2014, Section 19).

The legislation replaced Statements of Special Educational Needs (Education Act 1996) with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). These legal documents, used within England, detail the child's strengths, needs and difficulties and include measurable outcomes based on the young person's goals and aspirations. The reforms promoted collaborative working and joint commissioning between education, health and social care (Children and Families Act, 2014, Section 23).

2.3.3 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice: 0 – 25 years (2015)

Statutory guidance for the reforms was published in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice: 0 – 25 years (SEND Code of Practice; DfE/DoH, 2015). The Code included an emphasis on the young person's voice and promoted person-centred planning within an 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' framework (e.g. Section 7.13). The guidance also called for support for SEND to be evidence-based (Section 6.59).

2.3.3.1 *SEND Code of Practice and Annual Reviews*

The legislation included an additional statutory duty for LAs and educational provisions to review EHCPs annually (Annual Reviews; ARs). This was to ensure the young person's progress and support is monitored and updated regularly. Again, and especially relevant for the current study, the inclusion of the young person's voice was stated as statutory (DfE/DoH, 2015, Section 9.168).

2.3.3.2 SEND Code of Practice and post 16 provision

A significant change to the legislation was the extension of SEND support for young people up to the age of 25 (see p.14, DfE/DoH, 2015). Previously, support was provided for 2 - 19 year olds (DfES, 2001). This means that LAs have to work with a wider range of provisions than before, such as colleges, private and voluntary sectors, vocational courses and apprenticeships (see Section 7.1; DfE/DoH, 2015).

The changes required professionals and LAs to establish new procedures and practices, especially as they must consult directly with young people over the age of 18 (Children and Families Act 2014). Parents or other supporting adults may still be involved at the request of the young person or as required to provide support or act as an advocate (Section 8.17 and 9.25; DfE/DoH, 2015). However, the advocate's views must not be solely relied upon (Section 1.10).

2.3.3.3 SEND Code of Practice and preparation for adulthood

Greater emphasis was also placed on preparation for adulthood. At Year 9, any reviews, assessments and plans should focus on preparing the young person for transitions to post school placements, and relate to the four areas of preparation for adulthood:

- “higher education and/or employment”;
- “independent living”;
- “maintaining good health”;
- “participating in society”

Section 8.10; DfE/DoH, 2015).

2.3.4 Summary

The legislation has substantial bearing on this dissertation. It gives young people in post-16 settings significantly more rights with regards to their SEND support and having their voices included. Having a thorough understanding of such duties and requirements placed on the college in question is essential for providing the context which the professionals in this study are working within, and what the young people should expect from their AR process.

2.4 Psychological Theories: Self Actualisation, Self-Determination and Eco-Systemic Theory

Several psychological theories underpin the value and processes for accessing young people's voices to inform their SEND support.

Two of the theories relevant to this thesis originate from humanistic psychology and are related to supporting personal growth and development through interactions with others:

- 'Self-Actualisation' (Rogers, 1967)
- 'Self-Determination' (Deci and Ryan, 1985)

In this study, it is the relationships and interactions between the young people and those involved in their ARs which is of interest.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) 'Eco-systemic theory' will be discussed as it provides a useful framework for understanding the complex, inter-relational system of the learner, the AR process, college systems and wider societal context. The next section will provide an overview of these relevant theories.

2.4.1 Self-Actualisation

'Self-actualisation' (Rogers, 1959, cited in Carver and Sheier, 2004) is a continual process of learning and growing in which the person develops their 'sense of self'. Having a sense of self enables a person to make choices which are congruent to their true feelings and is essential for their well-being (Rogers, 1959, cited in Carver and Sheier, 2004). Rogers argues that at times, people can make choices which are based on what others think they should do, as humans have a strong need for acceptance, and feelings of self-worth can be dependent on this (known as "conditional positive regard", Rogers, 1959, cited in Carver and Sheier, 2004, p. 385). This can lead to feelings of 'incongruence' or unrest.

Rogers (1967) explained that working in a 'client-centred' way is essential for supporting the development of self-actualisation. In his description of a helping relationship, Rogers (1967) identified several requirements of the therapist when working in a client-centred way and supporting a person to develop and grow. This includes: non-judgemental listening; having a genuine interest in the person's experiences; and having a genuine acceptance and understanding of their perspective. The client needs to build trust in the relationship with the therapist in order for them to be able to talk about their true feelings (Rogers, 1967). Rogers (1967) argues that it is the relationship with the client that is of most importance when supporting a person with the process of self-actualisation, and it is through this that the person can start to identify their strengths and ways to develop and progress.

2.4.1.1 Relevance to the study

Rogers (1967) claimed that the theory and relationships between staff and students can be used to improve teaching environments. However, the efficacy of his theories was based on his work within therapeutic settings which means the clients had sought therapy themselves and most probably had a number of sessions.

As explained, (Rogers, 1959, cited in Carver and Sheier, 2004) 'self-actualisation' is an ongoing, continual process of reflecting and growing. Additionally, feelings of self-worth which are rooted in the perceived or actual judgements of others may be deeply ingrained (Rogers, 1959, cited in Carver and Sheier, 2004). This means that to support a young person in the process of self-actualisation, they will firstly need time to build trust with the person they are working with, and will also require ongoing opportunities to develop their awareness of their true thoughts and feelings about their life and aspirations. They may also need time and guidance to develop the skills needed to express these views, as well as the ability to reflect on and develop their ideas over time.

A consideration for the context of this study, is that the learners may have only attended the college for a few months and may not yet have developed effective relationships with the staff. They also may not perceive there to be any problems. A level of self-awareness in the helper is required to deliver "unconditional positive regard" (Rogers, 1959, cited in Carver and Sheier 2004, p.384), and with a body of staff with a range of qualifications (NUS, 2015) and a context of limited time and funding, this may not be possible in all cases of learner consultation. Certain communication and cognitive skills in the learner may also be needed for such interactions, and therefore additional support, time and resources may be required when working with learners with speech and language or communication and interaction difficulties. These conditions create tensions between theory and practice which must be considered when evaluating SEND processes.

2.4.2 Self-Determination

Deci and Ryan (1985), proposed 'Self-Determination' theory, which argues that behaviour may be 'self-determined' (intrinsically motivated) or 'controlled' (extrinsically motivated). When intrinsically motivated by a task, a person will stay engaged for longer and gain a greater sense of satisfaction, enjoyment and sense of autonomy. Lack of self-determination in a task can have a detrimental effect on a person's well-being and can lead to "helplessness" and "impaired learning and performance" (Deci and Ryan, 1985, p. 37).

2.4.2.1 Relevance to the study

Self-determination is not necessarily having control although it can be one way of fulfilling this need (Deci and Ryan, 1985). What is important is having *choice*. This potentially has great relevance to this study as working in a person-centred way may be less about the learner having control of the various aspects of their education and more about them having a choice.

2.4.3 Eco-systemic theory

Eco-systemic theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) stated that the development of a person is dependent on the complex inter-relational connections within and between their immediate and surrounding environments. Each environment is a 'nested structure' within the next one, with the child at the centre. The immediate environment is the 'Microsystem' and includes learning through interactions between the people and organisations within it (e.g. family, friends, school, local community groups, child-care centre etc.). The child is also affected by environments they do not directly participate in, known as the 'Mesosystem', such as local authority policies, health and social care services, local neighbourhoods, the media etc. The final influential system is the 'Macrosystem': the attitudes and ideological beliefs affecting his or her particular culture.

2.4.3.1 Relevance to the study

Eco-systemic theory is relevant as it provides a framework for understanding the inter-relational systems affecting the young people at the college with SEND and their experiences of expressing their views. National and local contexts will have a bearing on the systems and resources available. Interactions within and between the environments will influence the practices and dynamics of the staff and educational experiences of the young people. Finally, the ingrained beliefs and attitudes towards SEND (the Macrosystem) which are held by the culture will have a bearing both within and between each layer of the system.

2.4.4 Summary

These psychological theories illustrate both the importance of seeking the views of young people when making decisions about their SEND support as well as the complex inter-relational dynamics influencing this process. Self-Actualisation (Rogers, 1967) and Self-Determination (Deci and Ryan, 1985) suggest that a lack of acceptance and choice in decision making could impact a young person's overall development and well-being. Additionally, the young person is less likely to engage with the processes. Finally, Eco-systemic theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) provides a framework for understanding the complex relationships and factors which impact the college's processes for eliciting young people's voices, and the experiences of those involved with the ARs.

2.5 Learner's voice: Participation

Theory and legislation provide clear arguments for the value of accessing and using learners' voices. Within the literature, there is a wide debate regarding the continuum on which the learner voice appears. The following section presents the literature and research on these variances and concerns.

2.5.1 Hart's Ladder of Participation

Hart (1992) addressed the definition of 'voice' and the associated variances of its use, from a 'tokenistic' level to full integration in society and illustrated this using the 'Ladder of Participation' (Figure 1):

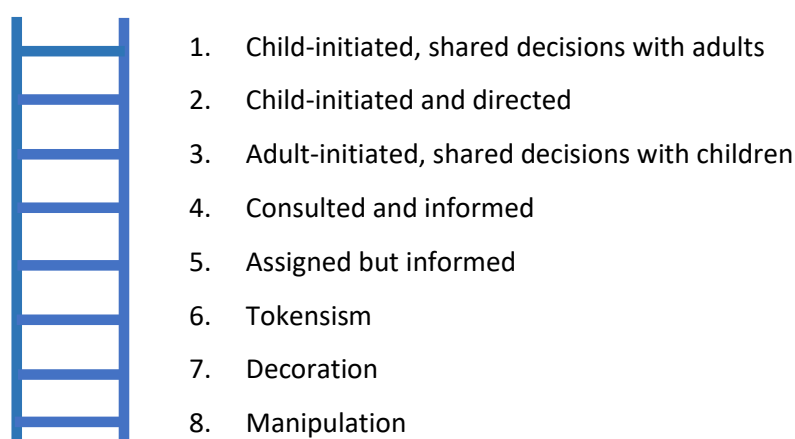


FIGURE 1: HART'S LADDER OF PARTICIPATION (1992)

At the lower rungs, young people may be used for purposes they do not fully understand or not given feedback on the decisions they have been consulted on. The "Tokenistic" rung describes how they may be asked for their views but are not given the choice of how they express it. For full integration, young people need to fully understand the issues they are being consulted on, have equal status and be given feedback on decision making, and lead on projects (Hart, 1992). The top rung is not the gold standard but there should be an awareness of the different levels and young people should have a choice over their level of involvement.

2.5.2 Issues of authenticity

Fielding (2001) expressed concerns that statutory and social pressures to ascertain young people's perspectives was resulting in professionals using it for purposes of "accountability" (p. 123) as opposed to a genuine drive to inform and shape provision. Ware (2004) advised against practitioners assuming a child's preferences. Hall (2017) argued that 'talk' may be a more effective term for its authentic inclusion, as this is 'bi-directional' and includes listening and a mutual construction of ideas.

These concepts were demonstrated by Waller and Bitou (2011). Photos and videos were found to be useful in enabling children to record and present their interests, but it was the discussion with the adults which gave the true meaning behind what they were saying. What empowered the children was the “shared construction of knowledge” (p. 15).

It seems that learner voice does not exist within a vacuum or as a single entity but along a continuum. Furthermore, learner voice exists within a social dynamic in which the recipient needs to actively listen, respond, co-construct, and act upon the views being expressed.

2.5.3 Issues of interpretation and power imbalances

Other considerations of ‘learner voice’ are the potential for their views to be misinterpreted and power imbalances. Ingram (2013) identified how an EP’s epistemological stance or underpinning psychological theory can result in different interpretations of a young person’s view. For example, a belief that there is an ‘objective truth’ can mean the young person’s views are not equally valued or considered. Ingram explained how this can be disempowering and argues that to re-address the balance, young people should be supported in being able to challenge the adult’s interpretations.

Concerns about the use of learner voice continue to be raised (Ashton and Lambert, 2010; Bahou, 2011; Palaiologou, 2014). Its value is agreed, and often young people’s views are sought but change does not always occur (Whitty and Wisby, 2007; Bahou, 2011). As Rudduck (2006) points out, “Teachers are the gatekeepers of change” (p.140).

2.5.4 Summary

This section has provided an overview of the issues related to the participation and use of learner voice, such as authenticity, misinterpretations and power imbalances. In relation to this study, it seems that the authenticity and effectiveness of learners’ voices being used to inform their ARs is dependent on:

- young people being fully informed and given a choice for their level of involvement (Hart, 1992);
- a co-construction of ideas and their views being given equal status (Waller and Bitou, 2011; Hall, 2017);
- young people knowing how to challenge misinterpretations (Ingram, 2013);
- and the views of the young people being acted on (Rudduck, 2006; Whitty and Wisby, 2007; Bahou, 2011).

2.6 Learner's voice: Informing practice

So far, the legislative and psychological reasoning for the use of young people's voices to inform their educational support has been explored, as well as the issues related to this. Rudduck, Chaplain and Wallace (1996) argue that consulting children and young people should be "the foundation for thinking about ways of improving schools" (p. 1). The following section will review the literature on this area of learner voice with a focus on young people aged 16 upwards, and will use the following headings:

- Interviewing young people to inform teaching and learning processes
- Interviewing young people to inform transitions
- Research led by young people to inform transitions

2.6.1 Interviewing young people to inform teaching and learning processes

Kubiak (2017) investigated learners' perceptions of the teaching and learning processes at a provider for Higher Education. Trained co-researchers with intellectual disabilities carried out semi-structured interviews with their peers and investigated important aspects of their learning environment. Feeling comfortable and accepted was found to be important, as was having clear goals to help them stay focused and persist with tasks. Self-reflection was noted as being beneficial for identifying ways to self-improve. The students also highlighted the social nature of learning and how their peers, teachers and students influenced task engagement.

The findings demonstrated the students' abilities to reflect on teaching and learning processes as well as the value of using students' views for improving teaching and learning environments and inclusive practice (Kubiak, 2017). The study also exemplified how beneficial it is for young people to lead change.

This study was carried out in a specialist setting for Intellectual Disabilities in Dublin, and therefore was not in England where the SEND Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015) applies. This means the students' experiences were specific to the teaching and curriculum design of their course and influenced by The Republic of Ireland policies and social nuances of the setting. As noted by Kubiak (2017), this makes it difficult to generalise the findings. Furthermore, the data was analysed using a phenomenographic approach (Marton and Booth, 1997, cited in Kubiak, 2017) which requires the researcher to carry out interpretations of participants' reports. The researchers' own experiences of disability could have added validity to the findings but may also have skewed the findings. Nevertheless, the study provides several points of consideration for using young people's voices to inform teaching practices in a post-16 setting.

2.6.2 Interviewing young people to inform transitions

Carroll and Dockrell (2012) interviewed 19 young people with Specific Language Impairments (SLI) aged 19 to 23 years about their experiences of transitions to further education (FE) and employment. Several aspects either helped the transition process or created barriers.

‘Personal characteristics’ such as certain strengths of character or skills was one aspect which helped, as was ‘self-determination’. Positive experiences of transition included participants having a level of choice and self-advocacy (Carroll and Dockrell, 2012). Support and advice from their parents were other enablers. Professionals provided both support and barriers to successful transitions depending on the young person’s experience and the effectiveness of the professionals and the advice they gave.

The participants in Carroll and Dockrell’s (2012) research were selected from a sample which had been involved in a study on transitions two-years beforehand (Carroll and Dockrell, 2010; cited in Carroll and Dockrell’s, 2012). It is possible that the young peoples’ ability to be so articulate on their experiences is due to this previous involvement in research and greater awareness of the transition process. Then again, it could be argued that having more opportunities to reflect is essential for developing such skills and enabling young people to give their views effectively, particularly if they have SEND.

2.6.3 Research led by young people to inform transitions

Rome, Hardy, Richardson and Shenton’s (2015) research was led by disabled young people who belonged to the eXtreme Group: a group of 50 young people aged 12 – 19 years who discussed and acted on decisions in their LA which affect their lives. Approximately 20 self-selecting participants took part in a discussion group about their experiences of transitions.

The study found that the young people wanted more information about the different options available; would like more involvement in decision making; more time getting to know the new settings and the support staff; and both anxiety and excitement was reported. The research led to systemic changes (i.e. a ‘Transitions support worker’ role was created) and demonstrated the young peoples’ ability to lead on major projects which impact their lives.

The data collection for the study was conducted via ‘Agenda Days’ during which particular topics were discussed. These can be understood in research methods as ‘focus groups’. This approach can be advantageous as it provides a lot of data within a short amount of time and re-addresses researcher-participant power imbalances (Robson, 2002). However, careful management is often needed (and in this study, the adults remained on the periphery as much as possible), as dominant views and

personalities can take over (Robson, 2002). The study's strength though is its use of the top rungs of Hart's 'Ladder of Participation' (Hart, 1992) for researching transitions.

2.6.4 Summary

These studies demonstrate the ability of young people to reflect on their experiences, identify the enabling and challenging aspects, and affect change. They also demonstrate the enthusiasm of young people to be involved in the decision making and development of processes which affect them. In terms of the current study, this supports the inclusion of the learners in the illuminative process for understanding and developing ARs.

2.7 Learner's voice: Consultation

The previous section discussed research which demonstrated how young people's voices can inform and improve practice. There has been a growing body of literature on the conditions needed for effective consultation with young people. Rudduck (2006) described consultation as "talking with pupils about the things that matter" (p. 137). Roller (1968) argued that consultation with young people is highly beneficial for the assessment of learners' progress and their development of metacognition. Ashton and Lambert's (2010) study included both EPs and young people and found that it was the general culture and attitudes of the learning environments which were in essential in ensuring the effective consultation with young people, and the EPs explained that the young people "need to have had experience of such involvement previously" (p. 49).

Variances in practice for consultation have been found across settings and localities. Norwich and Kelly et al. (2006) interviewed staff and young people in the South of England and found young people were consulted in a variety of ways using formal and informal methods. Inconsistencies occurred due to the general ethos of the settings, the relationships between the young people and staff, and factors such as their age, cognition and communication skills. Differing levels of inclusion were also seen for young people and their ARs, with some reports that it might not be in a young person's best interests to attend the meetings due to the potentially negative content of the conversations.

Norwich and Kelly et al.'s (2006) study was carried out with primary and secondary schools and so may not relate to post-16 settings where young people have greater rights. What's more, the study happened prior to the changes in legislation for SEND (DfE/DoH, 2015). Nevertheless, it provides a preliminary understanding of the variances which can occur with consultation.

The next section will provide a review of the research on effective practices for consulting with young people.

2.7.1 Young people's perceptions of consultation processes

Woolfson, Harker, Lowe, Shields, Banks, Campbell and Ferguson (2006) used focus group to investigate how young people in Scotland wanted to be consulted. The participants were aged 12 years and older with abilities ranging from no additional needs to having a Record of Need (RON; known as a Statement of Educational Needs in England). One of the groups attended a post 16 educational setting.

All the participants felt they should be consulted on decisions which affect them. The post-16 group reported that at times they had not felt listened to. Generally, the young people preferred to speak with a familiar adult or family member. Crucially, having a choice in how they were consulted was a key finding as preferences varied. For example, some preferred having an advocate versus attending the meetings themselves. The young people also wanted to have better preparation for the consultation.

The findings informed a later study by Woolfson, Bryce, Mooney, Harker, Lowe and Ferguson (2008) which outlined the following conditions for young people to be effectively included in consultations:

- 1) Be fully informed about and prepared for meetings;
- 2) Attend meetings only with adults whom they already know;
- 3) Be asked their preference for who attends a meeting;
- 4) Have a choice in how they express their views in a meeting;
- 5) Be given evidence of being listened to during a meeting;
- 6) Always understand the language used during a meeting;
- 7) Be involved in decisions made during a meeting;
- 8) Receive written feedback after a meeting.

(Woolfson, Bryce, Mooney, Harker, Lowe and Ferguson, 2008, p. 57)

The recommendations were used to train teachers involved in consultation processes with young people. Semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and focus groups with the pupils, teachers and other attendees of the meetings were used to evaluate the new model. Generally, feedback was positive, however time for implementing the strategies was raised and some concerns were voiced about giving young people too much choice, particularly with regards to Strategies 2: "Attend meetings only with adults whom they already know" and 3: "Be asked their preference for who attends a meeting". Similar apprehensions have been noted elsewhere (Bahou, 2011; Hall, 2017; Bahou). To safeguard this, just as Woolfson et al. (2008) and others have stated (Roller, 1998; Ashton and Lambert, 2011), young people need to be well informed and practised at being part of consultations.

Like Kubiak (2017), Woolfson et al.'s (2006) and Woolfson et al.'s (2008) research was not carried out in England. They also pre-dated the legislative changes. The experiences and perspectives of the participants may not be generalisable to the current study. Woolfson et al.'s (2006) used a combination of questionnaires, interviews and focus groups. The quality of respondents' answers in questionnaires are dependent on the quality of the questions and so their answers may not be entirely reliable (Robson, 2001). However, the studies reflect the earlier discussions in this chapter regarding choice and the need for trusting environments and provides a useful starting point for effective consultative practice.

2.7.2 Summary

Consultation has been widely recognised as necessary for improving teaching and learning practices and supporting young people to engage in self-assessment (Roller, 1968; Rudduck, 2006). This section has reviewed the literature on the conditions necessary for effective consultation (Woolfson et al. 2006; 2008) and provides a useful and relevant context for how the learners in this study may experience their participation in ARs.

2.8 Person-Centred Planning

Person-centred planning (PCP) is an approach in which the person and their family is placed at the centre of the process (White and Rae, 2016). It focuses on their strengths, needs and aspirations (O'Brien and O'Brien, 2001). Martin, Ouellette-Kuntz and Cobigo (2013) stated the process requires:

that the **right** people be involved in the planning, that the **right** attitudes...are in place,
and that the **right** actions are taken to support the achievement of goals. (p.6)

PCP was referenced in the Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015, Section 9) for the application and assessment of EHCPs. Specific tools and frameworks for the approach have been adopted by some LAs in England (i.e. Helen Sanderson Associates, <http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/>; Norwich and Eaton, 2015; White and Rae, 2016).

The following section will include a review of the research on PCP in the UK, including its benefits and a critique of the approach.

2.8.1 Benefits of Person-Centred Planning

The benefits of PCP have been investigated, including its use for school transitions (White and Rae, 2016), post-school transition meetings (Kaehne and Beyer, 2014) and for the planning of support for young people and adults with intellectual disabilities (Wigham et al., 2008).

Reported benefits of PCP include feeling listened to and understood; the meetings being accessible and empowering (White and Rae, 2016); providing collaborative approaches to problem solving; increasing thoughts of ambition and direction (Wigham et al., 2008); and increased attendance and engagement with the meetings (Kaehne and Beyer (2014).

However, the unfamiliarity of the process means that it can be daunting and White and Rae (2016) recommend that participants are fully prepared. The skills of the facilitator are also integral to its success. Kaehne and Beyer (2014) found imbalances in the meetings, with greater emphasis on educational outcomes; a lack of adult social services input; and few concrete actions to support the person's goals. Difficulties were also found with meeting all of the requests of the young people, and Kaehne and Beyer (2014) stressed the need for improved services to support inclusive practices and equal opportunities.

Despite Wigham et al.'s (2008) findings coming from a two-year longitudinal study (see Robertson et al. 2007b), measurement of the longer-term impact of PCP is unknown and is arguably impossible to ascertain due to the infinite number of influential variables. None of these studies relate specifically to reviewing SEND support in post-16 settings but they do demonstrate the ability of PCP approaches to encourage greater engagement of young people in decision-making meetings.

2.8.2 Evaluating processes of Person-Centred Planning

Robertson et al. (2007a; 2007b) carried out a two-year study with 93 adults with intellectual disabilities, their key workers and the facilitators of PCP meetings in England to investigate the processes.

Robertson et al. (2007a) concluded that although having a structure to follow can be helpful, it is the pre-existing ethos of PCP and ongoing structures which are most important to its success, including having a key worker already in place and a committed facilitator. Essentially, PCP needs to be delivered holistically to have a lasting impact (Robertson et al., 2007b).

Robertson et al.'s (2007a; 2007b) findings came from a large sample of participants but may not be representative of its population. As the authors state, it did not include psychiatric disorders or behaviour challenges. Within a post-16 setting and for AR meetings, additional considerations may be needed, particularly as behaviour challenges are likely to be part of the SEND population of a college.

2.8.3 Critique of Person-Centred Planning

Whether PCP really affects change has been debated (Mansell and Beadle-Brown, 2003a; 2003b). A recurring theme is that actions need to be taken which result from the meetings, otherwise an

“implementation gap” will occur (Mansell and Beadle-Brown, 2003a, p. 5). Limitations to its success can result from a lack of services, resources and funding needed to implement the changes (Robertson et al., 2007a).

A systematic review of PCP (Ratti, Hassiotis, Crabtree, Deb, Gallagher and Unwin, 2016) revealed an inconclusive and limited evidence base for its use in the UK and within education, and the literature search for this dissertation yielded similar results. Furthermore, there is some evidence to suggest it could potentially be harmful as the young person may acquire greater awareness of their interests and aspirations but face barriers and limitations due to their circumstances or a lack of available services (e.g. Factor et al., 1996, cited in Ratti, Hassiotis, Crabtree, Deb, Gallagher and Unwin, 2016). Confusingly, although the Code of Practice references its use (see Section 9; DfE/DoH, 2015), it does not specify what is meant by the term and its use for SEND processes is somewhat problematic given the call for evidence-based practices (Section 6.59).

2.8.4 Summary

This section has provided an understanding of PCP, including its benefits, the conditions necessary for its success and the complexities involved with measuring its impact. PCP tools can provide a structured approach for the requirements set out in the Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015) but its evidence base in the UK is limited and, it seems, non-existent for ARs with 16 – 26 years olds in post-16 settings. Its consideration for this dissertation is important as aspects of research on PCP may be relevant when reviewing the college’s SEND processes, given the principles of the Code and references to person-centred planning.

2.9 The Role of the learning support worker

The previous sections of this chapter have explored the topics relevant to the inclusion of young people’s voices in SEND processes. Research question 2 of this study investigates how learning support workers in the college contribute to the elicitation and use of learners’ voices to inform their ARs. To provide the rationale for the inclusion of the role in the study, the role within educational settings will now be explored.

2.9.1 Roles and responsibilities of the LSW

The government paper ‘Raising Standards and Tackling Workload: A National Agreement’ (DfES, 2003) called for additional support staff in educational settings when addressing the workloads of teachers, and acknowledged the beneficial contributions of support staff, particularly for special educational needs (see Section D: 61).

The role has a variety of titles including ‘teaching assistants’ (Devecchi and Rouse, 2010), ‘learning support assistants’ (Veck, 2009), and ‘classroom assistants’ (Bailey and Robson, 2004). For current purposes, the college’s use of ‘LSW’ will be used.

LSWs can have a range of responsibilities including one to one support, delivering learning interventions or working specifically with SEND (Groom and Rose, 2005; Blatchford, Russell, Bassett, Brown and Martin, 2007; Griffiths and Kelly, 2018).

In post 16 settings, LSWs have been found to have the following duties:

- Deliver planned support to young people according to their learning needs
- Guide and assess
- Contribute towards the achievement of learning objectives
- Facilitate learning by the selection of materials and methods appropriate to the student’s needs
- Assist identified students to participate fully in learning experiences

(Bailey and Robson, 2004, p. 389 – 390)

Qualifications required for the role vary (Bailey and Robson, 2014) from having specialist skills and accreditations to none at all. Bailey and Robson (2014) found that although training for LSWs is valued by their managers, it is mostly provided in-house and career progression is limited. They also reported that managers of LSWs felt it was the relationship between LSWs and the learners which had been essential for the retention of students in difficult situations.

Bailey and Robson’s (2014) study was carried out 15 years ago and included only 5 colleges. Nevertheless, similarities can be seen in the job descriptions of the LSWs in this study (Appendix 1).

2.9.2 Unique contribution of the LSW

LSWs can provide a unique contribution to the learning environment, such as the nurturing relationships they foster (Groom and Rose, 2005) and the variety of skills and commitment they have for supporting SEND (Roffey –Barensten and Watt, 2014). They have been described as an “untapped resource” (Salter, Swanwick and Pearson, 2017, p.41), often with greater insight and knowledge of the learners’ SEND than the teachers. Young people in Palikara, Lindsay and Dockrell’s (2009) study commented that they would not have ““achieved so much”” (p. 64) without this additional support.

Despite this, it seems the role has not always been given the status it deserves. For instance, LSWs have shown willingness to attend review meetings for learners but their attendance has not always been made possible (Roffey –Barensten and Watt’s, 2014).

Concerns about the quality and measurable impact of LSWs on Learners' progress have also been raised, along with the quality of training for the role and lack of joint planning with teachers (Blatchford, Russell, Bassett, Brown and Martin, 2007; Blatchford, Basset, Brown, Martin, Russell and Webster, 2009).

Compared to primary and secondary schools, research on LSWs within post 16-settings is limited but the results and recommendations have been similar for improving the effectiveness of LSWs for inclusive approaches. The literature on LSWs in post-16 settings will now be reviewed followed by a summary of the findings and the relevance to this dissertation.

2.9.3 Supporting inclusion

Veck (2009) carried out an ethnographic study with LSWs in a sixth form college to explore how perceptions and behaviour towards the role and the learners they supported created inclusive or exclusive practices. Observations and interviews were used.

The physical spaces the LSWs occupied, confusions about the role and the attitudes of the teaching staff were found to create divisions and exclude both the LSWs and the learners. Veck (2009) concluded that for colleges to improve their inclusive approaches towards SEND, the status of LSWs needed to be raised and suggested giving standardised rates of pay, training and qualifications.

Ethnographically based studies such as this have several limitations. The experiences reported and the language choices and attitudes observed may be the result of a number of unique factors within and outside of the college. Furthermore, as O'Reilly (2005) explains, ethnography requires the researcher to be extremely reflexive as the reality is co-constructed as the events occur. The researcher's presence, influence and line of questioning all need to be carefully considered when drawing on ethnographic research.

2.9.4 Addressing the training needs

McLachlan and Davis (2013) implemented a training programme in a college for the professional development of LSWs, and collected data on its impact using diary entries, interviews, observations, evaluation forms and field notes. Benefits of the training included an increase in personal and professional confidence and an increased understanding of their role for supporting inclusion in a post-16 setting. Furthermore, the formal teaching of the theory and practical application of effective communication enhanced their skills and strengthened their relationships with the teaching staff as well as the students.

The LSWs reported a desire for greater acknowledgement of their role and skills and further exploration of the LSWs perceptions revealed a lack of confidence regarding SEND support in post-16

settings (McLachlan, 2014). This was compounded by a lack of formal training (McLachlan and Davis, 2013; McLachlan, 2014).

The training programme delivered in this study was designed by a lecturer working at the college and is likely to have been based on the specific needs of the setting and so it may not be applicable to all. Even still, the studies depict a workforce which is passionate about its role and has great potential for supporting SEND in post-16 settings, especially when appropriately trained (McLachlan and Davis, 2013; McLachlan, 2014).

2.9.5 Summary

This section has provided a description of the role of the LSW, the unique contribution they bring through their relationships with learners and potential to improve inclusive practices, as well as the issues such as a lack of acknowledgement, training and qualifications. The inclusion of LSWs in this dissertation was considered relevant due to their unique contribution and their potential role in accessing the learners' views for their ARs. What's more, as Roffey-Barensten and Watt (2014) assert, hearing the voices of *all* forms of teaching staff in an educational setting is essential when reviewing practices to affect change.

2.10 Role of the learning support co-ordinator/SENCo

Research question 3 of this dissertation explores how the role of the learning support co-ordinator (LS Co-od) elicits and use of the learners' voices to inform the AR. Preliminary discussions with the college identified LS Co-ods as a key role in the process as they co-ordinate several aspects of the college's SEND and AR procedures. Inspection of their job description (Appendix 2), revealed similarities between their role and the role of a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo), which is the title more commonly used for persons in charge of SEND processes (DfE/DoH, 2015). Unlike schools, colleges are not required to have a SENCo but must have a "named person" responsible for SEND and its "strategic and operational management" (DfE/DoH, 2015, Section 7.22).

To provide a context and understanding of the LS Co-od role, this section will explore the literature on the role of the SENCo, including their responsibilities and the challenges they face in the changing landscape of SEND. Research into the role within post-16 settings is limited but key points of interest will be reflected on. Finally, points to consider for the current study will be summarised.

2.10.1 Roles and responsibilities of the SENCO

An outline of the role of the SENCo was provided in the 2001 'Special Educational Needs Code of Practice' (DfES, 2001):

- Overseeing the day-to-day operation of the school's SEN policy
- Liaising with and advising fellow teachers
- Managing the SEN team of teachers and learning support assistants
- Coordinating provision for pupils with special educational needs
- Liaising with parents of pupils with special educational needs
- Contributing to the in-service training of staff
- Liaising with external agencies including the LEA's support and educational psychology services, the Connexions PA, health and social services and voluntary bodies

(DfES, 2001, Sections 5.32 and 6.35)

Interestingly, these duties are fulfilled by the LS Co-ods in the present study.

In 2009, qualifications for the role were introduced, requiring new SENCos to have a Qualified Teacher Status and to have completed the National Award for Special Educational Needs Co-ordination (NASEN; OPSI, 2009). Later on, the role was described in Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015) as being best placed within the "school leadership team" (Section 6.87).

SENCos have been found to have a diverse range of duties and responsibilities. These have included being involved in problem solving for interventions (Weddell, 2015a); having responsibilities for child protection, attendance, staff management and training, liaising with families and outside agencies, and administration processes (Maher and Vickerman, 2017); and the day to day running of SEND processes and embedding of inclusive practices (Griffiths and Dubsky, 2012; Done, Murphy and Bedford, 2016). SENCos have reported having a desire to improve educational experiences in general and advocating for young people with SEND (Maher and Vickerman, 2017).

2.10.2 Consultation, decision-making and power

Mayer and Vickerman (2017) explored the experiences of secondary school SENCos and noted how the increase in responsibility following the legislative changes (DfE/DoH, 2015) had given SENCos greater power in decision-making. They suggested the growing diversity of practice amongst SENCos was possibly because they were more likely to choose which recommendations they implemented based on their own professional judgement. This could be beneficial for inclusive practices, especially as the NASEN qualification has been found to improve SENCo's knowledge and theoretical understanding (Griffiths and Dubsky, 2012). However, there is also the danger of decisions being made without robust consultation if other staff are not as equally trained. For example, Weddell (2015a) described how important it was for SENCos to discuss and share their ideas via a SENCo forum in order to challenge 'within-child' approaches of the SENCos and the appropriateness and efficacy of different interventions.

Participants in Mayer and Vickerman's (2017) study were enlisted via an online survey which limits the sample's generalisability as it was likely to attract SENCOs with a particular motivation to take part. Still, the study identified an area which requires further consideration such as how much control SENCOs have in decision-making.

Mayer (2016) explored this question of decision-making in light of the Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015). SENCOs were found to acknowledge the importance of consulting with parents but generally the final decisions were made by the SENCOs, justified often by a perception that they were best placed due to their skills and knowledge. With young people, SENCOs recognised the importance and attempts were made to include them in decision-making, but this appeared to be driven by a need to ensure they were "*on board*" (participant, Mayer 2016, p. 10) with an intervention to secure its success. Lastly, Mayer (2016) noted how LSWs were not mentioned at all in relation to consultation, which may have been an omission of information rather than fact, as Mayer noted, but is interesting as SEND is best planned collaboratively (Wigham et al., 2008; Martin, Ouellette-Kuntz and Cobigo, 2013; White and Rae, 2016; DfE/DoH, 2015).

Mayer's study was carried out with 12 secondary school SENCOs so their reports are likely to be limited to their experiences working with this cohort. Learners aged 16 plus have increased rights (Children and Families Act, 2014; DfE/DoH, 2015) and it could be expected that this would be reflected in the reports of professionals working within post-16 settings such as those in this study.

2.10.3 Issues faced by SENCOs

With regards to the changes in legislation (DfE/DoH, 2015), SENCOs have generally been in support of the underpinning principles and its overarching aims (Boesley and Crane, 2018; Palikara, Castro, Gaona and Eirinaki, 2019). However, it has presented several issues and challenges.

Boesley and Crane (2018) interviewed 12 mainstream primary school SENCOs and four mainstream secondary school SENCOs. SENCOs reported challenges with managing parental expectations due to the emphasis on person-centred planning. Similar difficulties have been voiced by others via the SENCO forum (Weddell, 2015b). Additionally, multi-agency working had been difficult to implement, and despite the inclusion of health and social care, the responsibility of young people's support and EHC process remained with the school. Issues with paperwork and processes had also been experienced, with "*regional disparities*" (p. 40) occurring across Local Authorities (LAs) creating additional work. Concerns relating to budget cuts were also raised. Overall, the SENCOs felt that the legislation had been put in place before any processes had been fully trialled and evidence-based and without the infrastructure to support it.

Palikara, Castro, Gaona and Eirinaki (2019) explored the perceptions of both SENCos and other professionals including Educational Psychologists, Speech and Language therapists, Head teachers and teachers. A vast majority of the sample were SENCos (44%). The age range they worked with was not specified. Similar issues were found such as challenges with multi-agency working and regional differences with processes. Professionals differed in opinions on the format of the EHCPs but what was noted was the importance of the documents being up to date and workable. Lack of infrastructure and budget cuts were also a concern, and shortened deadlines for the EHC assessments meant they were often delayed. Similar to Boesley and Crane (2018), frustrations resulted from the lack of planning and trialling of processes before putting them in place. One SENCo expressed her frustrations that the government were generally expecting more for less with no additional training (Palikara, Castro, Gaona and Eirinaki, 2019).

Again, the respondents in these studies may have been motivated to take part due to their negative experiences and keenness to have them heard. Regardless, the issues found appear to be echoed within other literature, such as the impact of budget cuts on SENCos' ability to meet SEND requirements and access training (Weddell, 2015b; Moore, 2019; Tirraoro, 2019).

2.10.4 SENCos in post-16 settings

Research into the role of the SENCo in post-16 settings is limited. Only two papers were found through the systematic search for this review. Kaehne and Beyer (2009) explored the views of various professionals involved in transition meetings between school and college, and interviewed 5 college-based SENCos, as well as SENCos from 15 specialist schools. Participants reported that the purpose of such meetings was to *"prepare young people for a life after education"* (p. 114). Kaehne and Beyer (2009) also found a difference in the type of outcomes recorded: 'Soft' outcomes related to general goals such as having greater independence, and 'hard' outcomes related to specific actions such the identification of the next college or course. SENCos often seemed more focused on the former. The paper does not differentiate between the findings of the specialist school SENCos and that of the college SENCos so it is hard to draw any firm findings which are specific to the role in a post-16 setting. What this study does show is another aspect of the SENCo role which is preparing young people with SEND for their transition to adulthood.

A final study regarding the role within a post-16 setting is Taylor's (2005). Taylor discussed the emerging role of the SENCo at Higher Education (HE), noting the increasing need for it given the increasing number of SEND learners attending university. The SENCo was found to provide learners with a valuable "point of contact", (p.27) providing support and advice and disseminating information to staff and reducing the need for learners to repeat themselves. However, generally the role of the

SENCo was underdeveloped and further training was needed for the rest of the academic staff to support the effectiveness of the SENCo.

This was a qualitative study carried out over two years which included both interviews and ethnographic methods with a range of learners and academic staff. It is hard to generalise from the findings due to its case study approach but it does provide a tentative glimpse into how the role of the SENCo looks in post-16 setting with older learners.

2.10.5 Summary

This section has provided an outline of role of the SENCo, the challenges they face due to the changes in legislation, and a preliminary indication of the role within post-16 settings. A lack of evidence-based guidance for SEND processes and multi-agency work, plus a lack of standardisation of paperwork and budget cuts appear to have been the profession's main challenges.

Within post-16 settings, the role is emerging and research on the topic is limited. Even still, the literature provides a useful frame of reference for this study and its findings due to the similarities which can be seen between the job description of the LS Co-od (Appendix 2) and the role of the SENCo.

2.11 Chapter summary

This chapter has provided a review of the main topics related to this dissertation.

Legislation stipulates the inclusion of young people's views in all aspects of their SEND support, including decision-making for their ARs (DfE/DoH, 2015). This is supported by the psychological theories 'Self-Actualisation' (Rogers, 1967) and 'Self-Determination' (Deci and Ryan, 1985). Bronfenbrenner's (1979) 'Eco-systemic theory' illustrates the complexities of such social, psychological and political processes.

The inclusion of young people's voices has many benefits (Carroll and Dockrell, 2012; Rome, Hardy, Richardson and Shenton, 2015; Kubiak, 2017) but concerns have been raised regarding authenticity and the tokenistic nature of some practices (Hart, 1992; Whitty and Wisby, 2007; Bahou, 2011; Fielding, 2011; Ingram, 2013; and Hall, 2017).

Young people require better preparation for consultations and more choice (Woolfson, Harker, Lowe, Shields, Banks, Campbell and Ferguson, 2006; Woolfson, Bryce, Mooney, Harker, Lowe and Ferguson, 2008). Approaches such as PCP can provide a platform for young people's voices (Kaehne and Beyer, 2014) but it is the skills and commitment of those involved which is essential (Kaehne and Beyer, 2014; Robertson et al., 2007b; White and Rae, 2016).

LSWs provide valuable support to young people (Groom and Rose, 2005; Palikara, Lindsay and Dockrell, 2009) but lack of training and acknowledgement of their role has potentially minimised their impact for SEND (Veck, 2009; Blatchford, Basset, Brown, Martin, Russell and Webster, 2009; Bailey and Robson, 2004).

A review into LS Co-od/SENCOs identified the difficult balance of leading on decision-making and including young people's voices (Mayer and Vickerman, 2017; Mayer, 2016). The reforms have created many challenges for SENCOs, such as a lack of guidance and support for the changes (Boesley and Crane, 2018; Palikara, Castro, Gaona and Eirinaki, 2019).

Drawing from the literature, what is of fundamental importance is both the legal and ethical centrality of hearing the learner's voice. This literature review has revealed a gap in research on the processes of eliciting and using the voices of young people aged 16 – 25, particularly in relation to AR's. The current study aims to address this gap by using the methodological approach, Illuminative Evaluation, to explore the practices and processes of a college in the South West of England.

The following chapter will provide an outline of the aims, research questions and rationale for this thesis and describe the methodological approach, methods used and the epistemological and ontological stance of the study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

As outlined in the previous chapters, the purpose of this study is to explore the processes carried out by a college when eliciting and using the voice of learners to inform their Annual Reviews (AR). To do this, the methodology of Illuminative Evaluation (I.E.; Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Stake, 1976; Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington, 1977; Burden, 2008) was chosen due to its social constructivist approach (Crotty, 1998; Creswell and Creswell, 2018) and recognition of the complex systems within and affecting an educational setting.

The following chapter will provide an outline of the rationale and aims of the study; the philosophical underpinnings and the social constructivist nature of the methodology; a comprehensive explanation of Illuminative Evaluation (including a critique and the rationale for its use); and a description of the methods chosen.

3.2 Rationale and aims

3.2.1 Rationale

Legislation affecting England has placed statutory duties on LAs and educational settings to include the voice of young people when reviewing SEND support (Children and Families, 2014; DfE/DoH, 2015). The changes to the reforms extended SEND provision to include young people up to the age of 25 (DfE/DoH, 2015). Psychological theories and literature on the inclusion of young people's voices present the benefits of its inclusion (i.e. Rogers, 1967; Roller, 1968; Deci and Ryan, 1985; Kubiak, 2017; Carroll and Dockrell, 2012). Issues of authenticity and power imbalances can mean that the elicitation and use of young people's voices can be tokenistic (Hart, 1992; Ingram, 2013). Research has found that for the inclusion of young people's voices to be effective, they need to have a choice in how they are consulted, be fully prepared and see the impact of giving their views (Woolfson, Bryce, Mooney, Harker, Lowe and Ferguson, 2008). Additionally, the facilitator of consultation meetings needs to be skilled and committed and there needs to be a pre-existing ethos of valuing young people's voices (White and Rae, 2016; Robertson et al., 2007b).

The literature review presents an ideal and a statutory duty for the inclusion of learners' voices in their ARs but there are challenges in being able to do this effectively. Within post-16 educational settings, the research is limited and the processes for the use of learners' voices for ARs has not previously been explored.

3.2.2 Aims

The aim of the current study is to illuminate how a post-16 setting, a college in the South West of England, has implemented the legislative guidance (DfE/DoH, 2015) and the processes they use to elicit and include the learners' voices in their ARs. By carrying out observations, documentary analysis and interviews with the key stakeholders involved (i.e. the learners, LSWs and LS Co-ods), it is hoped that a thorough understanding of the strengths and potential areas for development will be identified. The information gathered is likely to be useful for other professionals, such as Educational Psychologists (EPs), working with post-16 settings.

3.2.3 Research questions

- 1) What are learners' (with EHCPs) perceptions and experiences of the annual review process?
- 2) How do learning support workers elicit and use the learner's voice to inform the Annual Review process?
- 3) How do learning support co-ordinators elicit and use the learner's voice to inform the Annual Review process?
- 4) How might the college develop its processes for eliciting and using learners' voices to inform the Annual Review process?

3.3 Philosophical approach

Creswell and Creswell (2018) state that the research design of a study is informed by the general methodological approach. This approach is informed by several considerations which the researcher must make. For example, what are the researcher's skills and experiences, what is the nature of the problem which is being investigated and who is the study for. Importantly, the researcher must consider and be clear about their own ontological beliefs and "worldviews" (Creswell and Creswell, 2018, p. 5). Ontology is how a person defines reality (Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton-Nicholls and Ormston, 2014). 'Positivists' or 'Post-Positivists' hold the belief that reality is objective, can be measured and seeks to prove or disprove theories and identify causal effects between variables (Robson, 2002; Creswell and Creswell, 2018). This is in contrast to 'relativism' and 'constructivism' or 'social constructivism' (Crotty, 1998; Creswell and Creswell, 2018) which believes that reality is subjective, constructed through people's meaning-making of their experiences and the language they use to describe those experiences, and influenced by their historical, cultural and political circumstances.

Epistemology is the researcher's methods for investigating that reality: "ways of knowing and learning about the world" (Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton-Nicholls and Ormston, 2014). A 'positivist' approach is

generally taken for quantitative studies with the ontological belief that reality is objective (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2011). The reality exists and the researcher is an objective measurer of that reality. Quantitative measures employed generally include large-scale samples, observations, surveys, questionnaires, numeric measurements: the deduction of facts to determine a law which can be generalised to other populations (Robson, 2002; Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Qualitative research is often concerned with the epistemological view that understanding is gained through ‘inductive’, ‘interpretive’ and ‘socially constructed’ approaches (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2011). The researcher’s role is to interpret the descriptions and experiences given by the participants, recognise and account for the multiple realities and acknowledge their subjectivity and influence, with the aim of socially constructing the meanings with the participants and ‘inducing’ the understanding (Greig, Taylor and Mackay, 2008; Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton-Nicholls and Ormston, 2014; Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Sample sizes are generally small and qualitative methods include observations, analysis of documents and images, interviews and open-ended questioning (Creswell and Creswell, 2018), such as those used in this study.

The ontological and epistemological approach of the current qualitative study is constructive and interpretative as it seeks to explore and understand the multiple-realities of the learners, the learning support workers (LSWs) and learning support co-ordinators (LS Co-ods) as they experience the processes of eliciting and using the learners’ voices for ARs. This is with the aim of being able to describe and clarify such processes for the purpose of supporting the college to develop their procedures, and inform the understanding of relevant professionals such as EPs. The participants’ experiences will be interpreted within the context of their socio-cultural environment and with acknowledgement of my subjectivity.

3.4 Illuminative Evaluation

3.4.1 The historical origin

Illuminative Evaluation evolved from a recognition that traditional means of assessing the effectiveness of an innovation² were not meeting the necessary requirements or answering the

- ² Program, Innovation, Intervention, Curriculum: These terms, used interchangeably throughout this chapter, are used within the literature on Illuminative Evaluation (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Parlett, 1974; Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington, 1977; Burden, 2008). Within this chapter, they apply generally to any ‘program’ or ‘initiative’ which is adopted by an educational setting, whether due to legislative requirements or other reasons determined by the setting, and specifically to the AR process of the Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015).

pertinent questions, such as why an intervention achieved better results with one cohort than another. Parlett and Hamilton (1972) identified that alongside an ever-growing array of innovations for education, there was an increasing need to evaluate their impact and educational outcomes. Stake (1976) described how government officials made increasing demands for research into innovations to support decision-making within restricted budgets and multiple agendas. Predominantly, programmes and innovations were being evaluated using experimental, quantitative, positivist approaches (Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington, 1977). Such approaches use before and after assessments e.g. achievement tests, SATs results (Burden, 2008). Parlett (1974) and Parlett and Hamilton (1972) described this as measuring the innovation within an 'agricultural-botany paradigm': students are seen as crops who are subjected to different experimental conditions and measured for indications of improvements. Controls are put in place and variables are "codified" (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972, p. 6). The data gathered can be statistically analysed and the effectiveness of the programme is judged according to the statistical improvements seen and the programme's ability to meet a criteria outlined at the start.

Parlett and Hamilton (1972) argued there are several issues with this approach. Crucially, it does not take account of the nuances and multiple variables which affect the uptake, implementation and responses to an innovation, and instead presupposes that there is an 'objective truth' which is measurable and experienced by all. Parlett and Hamilton (1972) described how educational settings are unique and exist within their particular set of circumstances. Students are not passive in their experience of receiving the programme, teachers will adapt it depending on their own values and skills, and senior management will disseminate it within the context of other local and national priorities and agendas (Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington, 1977). An 'agricultural' approach does not account for the development of a programme which occurs as both students and teachers respond to, embed or exclude, either consciously or unconsciously, the various aspects of the innovation. As a result, vital information and data about the innovation and its impact may be missed. When changes do occur, the data collected loses its validity as it is no longer a measure of the original programme it was set out to evaluate. In all, the findings from an 'agricultural' evaluation "present an emaciated and artificial picture of the real world" (Parlett, 1974, p.14), and do not allow for an exploration of the questions and concerns that matter most to those involved. Furthermore, such agricultural approaches require large samples, which incur costs in both "time and resources" (p.7), or are required to implement controlled conditions, a concept which is virtually impossible within social contexts, and raises ethical considerations if part of the population does not receive the innovation (Parlett, 1974; Burden, 2008).

3.4.2 Illuminative Evaluation: An alternative approach

Collectively identifying these issues, a group of evaluators discussed the need for a new approach at the Churchill College Conference in 1972 (Parlett, 1974). They devised and proposed a new approach based on an agreed set of obligations which must:

1. be “Applicable to situations as they exist”; with “no artificial arrangements (such as ‘balanced control groups’)”
2. be “Reality-based” and should recognise the “complex and... atypical” and “review the curriculum...as it interacts with the its context”
3. “lead to studies that are useful and interesting”

(Parlett, 1974, p. 14)

The alternative approach devised, ‘Illuminative Evaluation’, falls within a ‘social-anthropological’ paradigm (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington, 1977). The evaluator experiences the educational context in order to become familiar with its particular set of circumstances, and then explores the development and responses to the innovation. It seeks to produce a “description and interpretation rather than measurement and prediction” (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972, p. 10). Illuminative Evaluation aims to inform decision-making by raising an awareness and understanding of both the successes and challenges of the innovation and providing clarity regarding the procedures involved. It aims to “provoke thought” (Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington, 1977, p. 230), discussion and reflection on the current teaching practices and systems. Due to the highly complex and rich data collected via the qualitative methods, Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington (1977) state that the approach is unequivocally interpretative. They argue that researchers can never be fully impartial, and so it is important to be transparent in their workings. As a counterbalance, Illuminative Evaluation seeks to represent the differing viewpoints and experiences of the various participants: a triangulation of data and construction of reality (Burden, 2008). An essential part of the process is the communication throughout the study and final presentation and checking of the data with key stakeholders to ensure that the findings and descriptions are a “recognisable reality” (Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington, 1977, p. 234).

A final feature of Illuminative Evaluation is its intent to be ‘client-centred’ (Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington, 1977). Where teachers have previously been required to make reflections, judgements and changes based on research which does not generally provide the details and complexities of a innovation’s implementation, I.E. aims to provide a clear description of how the intervention has been interwoven and affected their particular setting. In this way, it reflects the issues which are of most importance to the stakeholders and illuminates the most salient and relevant areas for development.

3.5 The structure of Illuminative Evaluation and the research design of the current study

The following section aims to provide an explanation of the structure of I.E. For clarity, the research design of the current study and the methods used will be included and described alongside the five stages of I.E. Included are descriptions of the setting and the participants and rationales for the choice of methods used at each stage. The explanation will begin with a description of the two core concepts explored within I.E which are: “The Instructional System” and “The Learning Milieu” (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Burden, 2008).

3.5.1 The Instructional System and the Learning Milieu

Instructional system

The Instructional System relates to the program, curriculum or intervention, and how it is applied to the current system. Rather than identifying the set of objectives the innovation aims to achieve, I.E. seeks to explore how it is ‘transmitted’ and embedded within the particular context. The general concept and ethos for an innovation maybe the same wherever it is applied, but how it is delivered will be unique and specific to the setting of the research (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Burden, 2008).

Current study

The instructional system for this study refers to the aims set out in the SEND Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015) which state that all learners with EHCPs must have ARs and that the decision-making regarding any outcomes or actions resulting from the meetings must be informed by the learner’s voice. The current study aims to explore how the AR process, the ‘innovation’, is carried out within a post-16 setting.

Learning Milieu

The Learning Milieu refers to the many human and material variables which are present within an educational setting: the “social-psychological and material environment” (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972, p.13). When investigating this aspect of the innovation, I.E seeks to explore the ripple effect which any change to a system creates. For example, how different students and teachers respond to the innovation, the practical and financial considerations and consequences, and the impact of the wider network and community. As Parlett and Hamilton (1972) state, it is impossible to separate the impact of an innovation from the learning milieu.

The current study

The learning milieu, or context of the innovation, was the post-16 setting chosen for this study. Identification of the post-16 setting, a sixth form college, was based on location and pre-existing links with the LA in which I was on placement for the doctoral training course. The college was based in the South West of England, catered for both full- and part-time learners and included alternative provision for learners aged 14 – 16 years of age. The college had four main campuses and learners attending the college were registered with one of three South West LAs. Of the four main sites, two had an SEND department which catered for 140 learners with EHCPs and provided foundation courses (e.g. Entry Level 1 courses for Literacy and Maths skills), work and life skills courses and supported internships. The college had two smaller, additional sites which were adjoined to an art gallery and zoological centre. Data obtained on 21.3.19 provided the following details regarding the number of learners at each campus:

Site	All learners	Full-time learners	EHCPs
Campus 1	3972	1931	175
Campus 2	2510	909	104
Campus 3	1497	983	59
Campus 4 and additional campuses (Art gallery; Zoo)	489	181	1
Off-site learners	1572	0	0
Total	9995	4004	339

TABLE 6: NUMBER OF LEARNERS AT EACH OF THE COLLEGE CAMPUSES

Courses provided at the four main sites included GCSEs, As- and A-Levels, vocational courses, apprenticeships and professional training courses and each site had particular specialisms (e.g. Health and Social Care; Hair and Beauty; Media; Technology; Sports and Fitness). The college's Ofsted report (a short inspection carried out within two years of the study) rated the college as 'Good'.

The socio-economic status of the areas the campuses are situated within are generally 'good' (sitting within 50% and 40% of the most deprived areas of the country: data from Multiple Indices of Deprivation, 2015) however they bordered several areas of 'severe deprivation' (within 20% and 10% of the most deprived areas).

3.5.2 Stages of Illuminative Evaluation and the current study

In terms of the specific methods used for I.E., Parlett and Hamilton (1972) propose these should be decided depending on what is appropriate to the issues being explored and arising throughout the study, and what is needed for further clarification: "the problem defines the methods used, not vice

versa” (p. 17). A range of tools can be employed including observations, interviews, and analysis of relevant policies and documents, as well as quantitative data such as questionnaires, if appropriate. The selecting of methods is a reflexive process, determined by data gathered to date and the salient points requiring further investigation. Within this study, observations, interviews and analysis of college documentation was used.

The structure of I.E has been formulated to a greater and lesser degree by various authors (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Parlett, 1974; Burden, 2008), but generally adheres to the following five stages, as defined Parlett (1974, p. 16 - 17):

3.5.2.1 Stage 1: Setting up the investigation

Central to I.E. is that it is client-centred. To ensure this, the study starts with an exploration with the setting into what the key stakeholders perceive to be the main issues and concerns they would like to explore and the questions they would like answered. The researcher is required to provide clarification of their role, purposes of their involvement (to explore, describe and illuminate, not judge), describe the relevant methods that may be used and set the expectations for what they will and will not be able to provide throughout the study. In essence, this is a negotiation stage in which a ‘contract’ is agreed (Parlett, 1981).

The current study

Stage 1 was carried out across multiple meetings with the college’s SEND co-ordinator (SENCo) and then later with the Education Support Manager. The change in point of contact was due to the SENCo leaving the college and a restructuring of the SEND support staff half-way through the study. The restructure led to the Education Manager having many of the managerial responsibilities of the SENCo. Other SENCo responsibilities were carried out by the role of the LS co-ordinators, as discussed in the Chapter 2: Literature Review.

During the preliminary planning stages of the study, the college was approached and the SENCo agreed to the study, pending ethical approval. In keeping with Parlett and Hamilton’s (1972) guidelines, the initial ‘contract’ between myself and the college was that I would aim to build up an overall picture of the AR process with a view towards understanding it as a working system.

The initial meeting with the SENCo helped to establish the four populations of most relevance to the aims of the study: the learners; the learning support workers (LSWs) who work with the identified learners; the learning support co-ordinators (LS Co-od) who are responsible for the planning of SEND support and management of LSWs; and the learners’ parents. The inclusion of the parents or Carers was later dropped. The reason for this change is described in the Conclusion, Section 6.6. It was felt

that the inclusion of these key stakeholders would allow for multiple perspectives and experiences of the AR to be considered which would increase the understanding of the processes and aid the checking and triangulation of data. In this way, a 'case study' approach was taken for this aspect of the design (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

The initial meeting informed the selection of methods to be used for the later stages of the study. These stages will be discussed in more detail further on but for current purposes, the methods decided were as follows:

- Stage 2: Observations of each of the learners' Annual Review meetings.
- Stage 3: Interviews with the learners, LSWs, LSW Co-od, and parents.

Participant selection

Due to the nature of the methodological approach, the time scale for the dissertation and the college having four main campuses, it was felt that a focus on four learners (one from each site) would be appropriate and would allow for an insight into the processes within each site and across the college. Following the initial plans (including the parents), this would give a total of 16 participants (four participants for each of the four populations). Ethical approval was given for the inclusion of each of these population groups, however as discussed above, the involvement of parents and carers was considered further during the planning stages and eventually dropped.

Another difficulty that became apparent during the early planning stages of the project was the use of the four sites. At one of the sites, there was currently only one learner with an EHCP. This made anonymity difficult. Further discussions with the college led to a focus on the two largest campuses (to be known as Campus 1 and Campus 2) which also had the SEND departments.

The criteria for the learner participants was that they had to have an EHCP and their AR needed to be during the time frame for the data collection. This was later refined by the college's timeframe for holding the ARs, which was during the months of January and February 2019. Once the learner participants had been established, the associated LSWs and LS Co-ods were invited to participate. It was agreed that if any LSWs or LS Co-ods did not want to participate, this would not prevent the learner from being involved in the study.

In an attempt to make the recruitment process random and self-selecting, learners with EHCPs were to be invited to talks held at the college which would explain the study, provide the relevant information and consent documentations, and give them the opportunity to sign up if they wanted to, either then or at a later time. Names would then be randomly selected if more than the required number signed up. See Appendix 7 for the support sheet provided to the learners.

The first of these meetings was to be held at Campus 1. The learners were to be informed of the meeting by the LSWs working with them, who had themselves been informed by the Education support Manager. This process became immediately problematic. Information about the study had been disseminated via email and had minimal impact. Additionally, the meeting was held during the learners' lunch break so as not to disturb lessons but this further reduced the likelihood of either the LSWs or the learners attending the meeting. The result was that the first of these meetings had zero attendees and it was clear a different approach was needed. Due to the size of the college, the number of learners with EHCPs and the varied timetables of the courses, successfully pitching to all potential participants in order to allow for a fair and randomly selected sample was extremely difficult.

As a result, a further amendment to the design was made that the study would focus on learners attending the SEND departments of Campus 1 and 2. Links were made with the LS Co-ods of the two departments and meetings were set up with learners selected by the LS Co-ods.

The study was explained to the learners and they were provided with information and consent documents to read through later with the support of a staff or family member if necessary. Two learners at Campus 1 and one learner at Campus 2 agreed to participate. Their LSWs were approached in due course and they agreed to take part and gave consent. The study was discussed again with the LS Co-ods with an explanation of their participation within it. Both LS Co-ods agreed and gave consent.

At this stage in the process, it was not possible to organise another pitch to the learners in order to gain a fourth participant. Discussions with the Education Support Manager led to a link with the LS Co-od for the learners with EHCPs who attended the mainstream site of Campus 1. This LS Co-od identified and approached a learner about the study and arranged a meeting for me to meet with the learner and her LSW. Both the learner and the LSW agreed to participate, as did the LS Co-od.

All information sheets, consent forms and confidentiality protocol forms can be found in Appendices 4- 6.

In total, 11 participants took part (LS Co-od2 worked with two of the learners). The learners were given the option of choosing a pseudonym. The groups of participants and the campuses they attended are in Table 7:

Campus 1	SEND Department Campus 2	SEND Department Campus 1	SEND Department Campus 1
Learner Jane LSW1: Jane's LSW LS Co-od 3	Learner E LSW2: E's LSW LS Co-od 1	Learner Zac Efron LSW3: Zac's LSW LS Co-od 2	Learner Pink LSW4: Pink's LSW LS Co-od 2

TABLE 7: PARTICIPANT GROUPINGS AND RELATED CAMPUSES

Description of the learner participants:

The learners' profiles are presented in Table 8. All the learners were female, White British and had an EHCP for Special Educational Needs and Disability. The ages given are the ages of the learners at the time of data collection.

Demographics	Jane	E	Zac	Pink
Age at time the of data collection	17y 5m	19y 4m	19y 7m	20y 4m
Special Educational Needs (as described by the college)	Moderate Learning Difficulties; Speech, Language and Communication Needs; and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).	Moderate Learning Difficulties and Communication and Interaction needs.	Severe Learning Difficulties; Physical and Sensory; Cognition and Learning; and Speech, Language and Communication Needs	Severe Learning Difficulties; Speech, Language and Communication; and Cognition and Interaction.
Year of attendance at the college	Second	Third	First	Fourth

TABLE 8: DESCRIPTION OF LEARNER PARTICIPANTS

Description of the learning support workers (LSWs)

All the LSWs in the study identified themselves as White British. Details are presented in Table 9.

Demographics	LSW1	LSW2	LSW3	LSW4
Age at time the of data collection	41 – 50 years	51 – 60 years	41 – 50 years	51 – 60 years
Number of years in post	6 months (but with the college since 2011)	Unknown	Unknown	3.8 years

TABLE 9: DESCRIPTION OF THE LSW PARTICIPANTS

Description of the learning support co-ordinators (LS CO-od)

All the LS Co-ods in the study identified themselves as White British. Details are presented in Table 10.

Demographics	LS Co-od1 (female)	LS Co-od2 (male)	LS Co-od3 (female)
Age at time the of data collection	31 – 40 years	31 – 40 years	21 – 30 years
Number of years in post	5 years (12 years with the SEND department)	18 months	18 months
Qualified Teacher Status?	No	Yes	Yes

TABLE 10: DESCRIPTION OF THE LS CO-OD PARTICIPANTS

3.5.2.2 Stage 2: Open-ended exploration

The purpose of this stage is for the researcher to familiarise themselves with the setting, the day to day running of the system, and the actions, behaviours, networks and relationships of the people involved in the innovation. Observations of daily life in the setting and/or the innovation in action may occur, general field notes of the processes may be taken, a range of people, including students, staff, parents and other professionals, may be spoken with, and relevant documentation may be

gathered. The researcher is seeking to build a general understanding of the system and starts to identify key areas for more detailed investigations. Similar to ethnographic studies, this stage provides the opportunity to develop a rich understanding and insight into the workings of the innovation being explored (Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington, 1977).

Current study:

Two methods were used for this stage of the study: observations and the gathering of college documentation.

Observations are commonly used to gain insight into the lives and working processes of a particular group of people (O'Reilly, 2005) and the choice of observations for this study was in-line with the ethnographical and explorative purpose of Stage 2 (Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington, 1977). Informal, participant observations were carried out of the learners' ARs (Robson, 2002). Informal observations allow for notetaking of various aspects of an event and allow the researcher a level of flexibility around what they record. This is different to structured observations (Greig, Taylor and MacKay, 2008) which restrict the researcher to observing specific elements such as pre-determined behaviours ('event sampling') or at specific times ('time sampling'). Even with informal observations, an observation protocol is helpful to ensure important information is recorded (Creswell, 2014).

The observation protocol designed allowed space for recording the date and time of the meeting, the learner's name and age, and attendees (including 'non-attendees'). To organise the notetaking, the protocol had four columns: 'Time', 'Person speaking', 'Information discussed/actions agreed' and 'Additional notes/thoughts' (see Appendix 8). Notes were taken in the form of a narrative record of events.

Observations were chosen as they allow the observer to see exactly what happens and gain insight into participants' behaviours and their reactions (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2011). The observations in this study provided the opportunity to watch and learn what happens in the AR meetings first hand and to triangulate or identify discrepancies with other data (i.e. from interviews). My role within the observations can be described as 'observer-as-participant' (Robson, 2002, p.317) or 'passive participation' (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2011, p. 182). The attendees of the meeting knew I was there to observe. Although I did not actively carry out any aspects of the meeting, by being present, I 'participated'. Interactions occurred between myself and the participants and there were opportunities for me to clarify details when needed. Additional attendees of the meetings (i.e. parents, tutors, a representative from another college) were provided with information about the study and their role in the observation before the start of the meetings and their consent was gained (see Appendices 4 - 6).

College documentation was gathered from the Education Support Manager, the link LS Co-ods and the college's website. Selection of the documents was based on discussions with the college regarding their relevance and determined by the aims of the study. Documents gathered were:

- the Guidance, Inclusion, Support and Transition Policy
- the college's guide for the learners, parents and Carers for their 'Total Support Guarantee' (a leaflet which outlines the college's support systems for both learning and pastoral needs).
- the Learner Charter and Codes of Conduct
- blank copy of the 'Annual Review of an Educational Health and Care Plan' document
- blank copies of the 'Student Feedback' and 'Parent/Carer Feedback' forms for the annual review meetings

The documentation listed can be found in Appendices 9 – 12.

3.5.2.3 Stage 3: Focused enquiries

Informed by stage 2, the researcher is starting to become aware of salient details in the data, such as reoccurring themes, successes, challenges, or differing perspectives. Stage 3 is used to narrow the investigations and carry out more systematic, in-depth studies of topics and problem areas. Often, structured and semi-structured interviews are used for this stage. Parlett (1974, p. 16) suggests that there may be not be a clear "cut off between stages 2 and 3", as it may be necessary for the researcher to return to stage 2 at various points to gather more general information to check and clarify their understanding and further data collection in stage 3.

The current study

Semi-structured interviews were used for Stage 3 of the current study. Unlike structured interviews in which the interviewer asks each participant exactly the same questions, semi-structured interviews mean that a schedule is created but the interviewer has the freedom to respond to the topics raised and can be more flexible and open-ended in their approach (Braun and Clarke, 2013). This allows them to ask the interviewee to explain their answers in more detail and provide the opportunity to explore any information which may not have been expected. Semi-structured interviews were appropriate for this study for several reasons.

- 1) As outlined, the study's ontological assumptions are that reality is constructed. Semi-structured interviews provide the opportunity for the interviewer to help the participant construct their thoughts and opinions throughout the interview and allow space for the checking of their meanings (Braun and Clarke, 2013).

- 2) The guiding principles of I.E. is that the approach is 'client-centred' (Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington, 1977, p.228). The topics of interest in this study related to the learner's experiences of support and decision-making being based on their thoughts and opinions. Semi-structured interviews fit the principles of the methodology and the topics of interest as the interviews can be adapted to what is significant and salient to the interviewee (Braun and Clarke, 2013).
- 3) The methodology of the study prescribes that Stage 3 is used for in-depth exploration of the themes emerging in Stage 2 (Parlett, 1974). The use of semi-structured interviews following the observations meant that open-ended questions could be used to explore, in greater detail, the participants' experiences of the ARs and the processes leading up to and after the meetings. The flexibility of the interviews meant that details specific to the Interviewee's AR could be included if appropriate.

Due to the co-constructive nature of semi-structured interviews, it is important that the interviewer is reflexive throughout the process; aware of their own biases and what this might bring to the interview, the questions they use and the interpretations they make; and aim to use the participant's "own words" (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 79) wherever possible. A reflexive account of my role as the interviewer and the impact this may have had on the interviews is included in Chapter 6.

An interview schedule was created for each of the populations at the start of the study based on the research questions (Appendix 13). Adaptations to the wording and additional questions were informed by Stage 2 of the study and themes occurring as the interviews took place. For example, it became apparent that the LSWs did not generally attend the AR meetings, and so certain questions were reworded and their views on this explored.

While liaising with the LS Co-od's during the planning stages, the decision was made to interview them in advance of the AR meetings. This was decided for several reasons:

- 1) an awareness of the timeframes of the project and the need to be time efficient;
- 2) the information gathered from the LS Co-od was 'process' rather than 'experience' oriented (although the interviews did include an element of opinion and perspective gathering);
- 3) LS Co-od2 informed me he would soon be leaving his post.

This meant that their interviews could be considered as part of Stage 2 as well as Stage 3, as the information helped to inform the more focused enquiries.

Participants were given the option of being interviewed at a time and location convenient to them. All chose to have their interviews at the college sites where they were based and during the hours when they were already onsite. Learner participants were informed that they could have somebody with them if they wished. One learner participant opted to be accompanied by her friend. All interviews were recorded using an encrypted, University of Bristol Dictaphone and later stored on the University of Bristol's secure data storage. All transcripts were anonymised.

3.5.2.4 Stage 4: Interpretation

Stage four requires the researcher to systematically work through the data collected, starting from the broad range of information gathered during Stage 2 through to the salient themes which emerged and were clarified during Stage 3. A level of interpretation is required as the researcher organises, 'illuminates' and explains the key findings, taking account of the various experiences and perspectives gathered. It may also be necessary for the researcher to check any further details to "fill in gaps in his knowledge" (Parlett, 1974, p. 17).

The current study:

An in-depth description of the interpretation stage of the current study is provided in Chapter 4: Findings. The following provides a brief overview of the analysis.

The analysis of the observations followed Wolcott's (1994) and Robson's (2002, p.487) framework and included:

- Description
- Analysis
- Interpretation

For the documentary analysis, the principles of content analysis (Robson, 2002, p. 363) were applied and the 'recording units' of interest were 'learner' or an equivalent term, and 'learner voice' or an equivalent term.

Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) was chosen for the data analysis of the interviews with the learners, LSWs and LS Co-ods. Themes for each individual participant's interview were found, then themes occurring across all the interviews of a type of participant (e.g. across all the learners' interviews) were identified and summarised.

Chapter 5: Discussion provides an explanation of the findings in relation to the research questions of the study and in the context of the findings from the literature review.

3.5.2.5 Stage 5: Reporting the study

The final stage requires the researcher to produce a report which is clear and useable for the key stakeholders. It is important that the researcher considers the audiences for their report and ensures that it addresses the issues and questions raised during Stage 1. Parlett (1974) warns of the importance of being sensitive while maintaining a level autonomy when creating the report. As described, a core feature of the study is that it is constructive and aims to reflect the experiences of all those involved (Burden, 2008). Therefore, although some audiences may not be 'comfortable' with some of the information reported, it is nevertheless important to represent those issues. For other readers, that information will be a positive validation of their experiences and an opportunity for it to be represented (Parlett, 1974).

The current study:

For Stage 5, a meeting was arranged and held in June 2019 and attended by the Education Support Manager, LS Co-od1, the college's link Educational Psychologist and me. The meeting was arranged through the Education Manager and was informed that she was welcome to invite whoever she felt would be interested or would benefit from attending, including anyone who participated in the study. The college's link Educational Psychologist was invited by me and attended the meeting (with the permission of the college) as she was aware of the study and had an interest in learning more about the college's processes to help inform her own practice.

An agenda was drawn up and shared with the attendees prior to the meeting. The agenda included the following:

1. Explanation of my approach to the study: Illuminative Evaluation
2. How the research was carried out (methods)
3. Strengths of the college and the AR process
4. Issues for consideration
5. Discussion

The main themes from the data analysis were presented via a discussion to allow for the college staff to reflect upon and respond to the points raised. See Appendix 14 for a copy of the agenda shared with the college and a write up of the discussions at the meeting. The college gave their initial responses and confirmed that they would be sharing the findings at their upcoming Cross Campus Processes Meeting in July. Attendees of the Cross Campus Meeting agreed upon next steps as a result of the findings presented to them and the outcome of this meeting was shared with me via email. The Discussion chapter and Appendix 14 include the college's feedback.

3.6 Rationale for using Illuminative Evaluation

I.E. was selected for this dissertation as it was felt to be relevant to the topics and issues which form the rationale, aims and research questions of the study, as well as addressing current research dilemmas within Educational Psychology, and the developing practice of the profession. It is these dilemmas in psychological research and practice which will be discussed first, followed by a discussion regarding its links to the aims and rationale of the study.

Similar to the methodological issues outlined 30-40 years ago (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Parlett, 1974; Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington, 1977), Burden (2008) and Schiff (2017) describe the continued pressures and misalignment of scientific approaches to answer social-psychological questions. Burden (2008) describes how historically, it was felt that Educational Psychology could only achieve recognition and validation if it could prove itself to be scientifically led, based on experimental foundations and research. This experimental approach has been debated and criticised by others who discuss the difficulties of applying positivist forms of research to answer the problems faced by EPs and educational systems. In response to an article by EuroPsychT (2001, cited in Fredrickson, 2002) which promoted scientific methods for all applied psychology, Fredrickson (2002) debated the ability of efficacy trials with controlled variables to replicate real-life practice and represent all populations. Fox (2011) argued that randomised controlled trials (RCTs) should not always be viewed as the 'gold standard' for identifying effective treatments, and developing an evidence-based profession, as it cannot be assumed that "“one size fits all”" (p.327). Schiff (2017) discusses the many challenges faced by contemporary psychology, such as the tendency for methods to be selected in order to 'strengthen' the validity, generalisability and perceived quality of a study, and in some cases, increase the likelihood of it being recognised and published. However, such methods do not always answer the most important and pressing questions for truly developing psychological understanding. Schiff (2017) therefore proposes that to move the profession and psychological research on, a more effective approach would be to adopt methods which explore peoples' "life experiences" and how they interpret and make meaning from these experiences. As an approach whose core principles are "applicable to situations as they exist", "reality-based" and "useful and interesting" (Parlett, 1974, p. 14), I.E. presented as a relevant, effective and progressive methodology with utilitarian benefits.

Educational Psychology has also seen developments in practice when working with schools and families to support young people with SEND. Underpinned by Vygotsky's Social Learning Theory and Zone of Proximal Development (1978; 1986), there has been an increase in the development and use of dynamic assessments, which aim to identify the young person's strengths and learning needs within the context of their environment, and their potential ability assessed through their interactions with

a mediator or teacher (Beaver, 2011). This qualitative approach is in contrast to the use of standardised tests, which give quantitative data such as I.Q scores, and have traditionally been used by EPs (Woods and Farrell, 2006; Freeman and Miller, 2001; Farrell, 2010). Alongside this, there has been a growing shift towards a more consultative approach in educational psychology work, both for casework and systemic work (Wagner, 1995, 2000; Dickinson, 2000; Kelly, Woolfson, and Boyle, 2008; Nolan and Moreland, 2014). Based on the humanistic theories described previously (e.g. Rogers, 1961), consultation methods recognise the unique set of circumstances for each case and differing perspectives, explore the social and environmental contexts of the difficulties, and aim to empower the consultees to identify workable solutions to their own problems. It can be argued that this consultative approach and increased focus on qualitative assessments of young people's learning experiences aligns well with the methodological model and values of I.E. As identified by Parlett (1981, p.221), "the approach has as much in common with *consulting* as it has with research". With regards to the topics of interests, research questions and rationale for this study, its 'client-centred' nature (Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington, 1977) has clear links to the values and principles outlined in the SEND Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015) and the Children and Families Act (2014), and of interest in this study: learner's voices and the AR process.

Finally, one of the purposes of this study falls within one of the stated reasons for carrying out I.E. (Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington, 1977, p. 230): "to advance general understanding for a broad readership". An outcome of the current study is to illuminate the processes of ARs in post-16 settings for accessing and using the voice of the learners. This is to aid not only the college's understanding and decision-making, but also to potentially provoke and inform discussions, decision-making and professional practice for post-16 settings more widely as well as the EPs working with them.

3.7 Critique of Illuminative Evaluation

A criticism of I.E. can firstly be considered as a terminology or semantic issue. Robson (2002) explains that although evaluative studies often use and benefit from the methods used for research, often such studies may not be actual 'research'. 'Evaluative Research' is a term which is sometimes used to account for this. The term 'evaluation' itself can hold negative connotations and perceptions which can be misrepresentative of its purposes. Participants, however well informed, may still feel that to 'evaluate' a program or intervention, part of the role of the 'evaluator' is to judge how the actions or processes are carried out, rather than to purely explore and describe. The culture and requirement to prove and evidence effectiveness in education has been discussed above (Stake, 1976; Burden, 2008), and as studies such as Case, Case and Catling (2000) demonstrate, the impact can be stressful and intimidating. The ethical considerations for such perceptions will be discussed later in this section and within Chapter 6: Conclusion. In terms of critique, this perception can lead to difficulties at the

start and throughout the study, as highlighted by Parlett (1972), as settings and professionals are reluctant to be 'investigated'.

Another criticism of I.E relates to the methodology's claims of being 'client-centred', and speaks to Stage 1 and Stage 5 specifically. Evaluative research can be controversial with regards to its negotiated nature (Robson, 2002). When evaluating a program or intervention, the motivations or reasons for the client requesting the evaluation may not always be transparent or value free. Furthermore, it is debateable who the true 'client' of such research is (Robson, 2002). I.E states that it is concerned with the interplay between the intervention and the responses of the staff and students, and the validity of the evaluator's interpretations are checked through communication with those involved (Parlett, 1974). Stage 5 requires the evaluator to create a report based on those checks and should meet the needs of the 'client', as agreed in Stage 1 (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972). The papers which describe I.E do not offer guidance on the identification of the 'true client'. Should this be the learners and the staff actively involved, experiencing and affected by the implementation of an innovation, or can the client be a managerial, governor or LA figure? Although it is acknowledged that some readers may not agree with some of the contents of the final report and stresses the importance of the evaluator maintaining their integrity as a researcher in order to produce a balanced and honest description (Parlett, 1974), the pressures placed on the researcher to potentially prove or disprove certain aspects of a program by the commissioning client are a possible and concerning matter.

As stressed by Parlett (1974), the findings and resulting report need to be 'useable' by the setting and the client. A challenge for creating such a useable document is the reliance this places on the evaluator's research skills in successfully identifying the most salient issues, adopting the most effective tools for exploring such issues, and then being able to represent them in a way that is believable and reflective of the realities of those concerned (Parlett, 1974). The additional challenge that may be faced by the evaluator can be explained by the psychological theory, 'confirmation bias' (Brehm, Kassin and Fein, 2002). This theory proposes that people tend to search for and interpret information that confirms their own beliefs. Information that contradicts their pre-existing beliefs may even serve to strengthen their beliefs as they work harder to justify why their point of view is correct. This suggests that even though the evaluator's report and descriptions may be highly reflective of the various viewpoints collected, its 'use-ability' and impact may be minimal depending on the client's uptake of the information.

A final critique of the methodology is its subjectivity: on the part of the researcher and their decision-making regarding their method selection and interpretation skills; on the part of the participants and the information they provide; and on the part of the dynamic between the clients/participants and the evaluator both during the data collection and checking of information (Jamieson, Parlett and

Pocklington, 1977). Subjectivity is a point of critique for all qualitative research (Creswell and Creswell, 2018) and as Schiff (2017) stated, it is not possible for any method to be 'value neutral'. Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington (1977) explain that I.E does not propose to be value neutral and instead, stressed the importance of being transparent regarding the decision-making throughout, the impact of the evaluator and subjectivity of the experiences and interpretations of both the evaluator and participants.

3.8 Alternative methodologies

When deciding upon the methodological approach for this thesis, several options were considered based on the rationale, research questions and philosophical underpinnings of the study.

Alternative approaches considered were:

- Action Research
- Ethnography

3.8.1 Action Research

Action Research has been identified as a prominent methodological approach for research concerned with educational evaluation (Sanford, 1995; Bennett, 2003). It is described as being a practical approach in which the researcher works alongside the participants empowering them to become part of the research process; identifying the issues which need exploring; planning together the steps and methods; sharing the responsibility of data collection; and finding solutions together (Robson, 2002; Hennink; Hutter and Bailey, 2011). The purpose of action research is to implement an action, as identified by the researcher-participants, as potentially effective in creating a desired social change, and evaluating the impact of that action (Robson, 2002; Hennink; Hutter and Bailey, 2011). It can be thought of as cyclical as part of the research may include further actions or changes as a result of the evaluation stage (Bennett, 2003). Although action research allows for a client-centred approach and adopts a constructive position, there are several aspects of this methodology which were not felt to be applicable:

1. Action research is carried out with participants taking on the role of researchers as well (Hennink; Hutter and Bailey, 2011), which was not the case with this study.
2. Time frames for both the dissertation and the nature of the 'annual' review process did not logistically allow for a fully cyclical, action-evaluation-action approach. In some frameworks suggested for I.E, this cyclical nature has been put forward (SPARE wheel: Burden, 2008), but was not relevant for the current study.

3.8.2 Ethnography

Ethnography is an anthropology-based methodology which is used to gain a rich understanding of a particular group of people (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). The researcher becomes actively involved in the group and its culture and community in order to fully understand the perspectives and meaning-making of the participants and be able to produce a detailed account of their lives and experiences (Robson, 2002). A range of methods can be used for collecting data, including documentation and 'informal conversations' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Often 'participant observation' is used (Robson, 2002) and due to the nature of this methodology, there is a strong need for 'reflexivity' on the part of the researcher in order to understand the impact of their presence in the group.

Ethnography was considered for this thesis as there was a need to understand the college's unique context and the perspectives of those involved. Ethnographic research questions are often concerned with understanding the 'experiences' or unique phenomena of a particular culture or community. In this case, an ethnographic study could have been used to understand how the group of learners with EHCPs experienced the AR process, with the ethnographic group being the learners. However, although there was a need to understand the college's unique set of circumstances and the interplay between this and the experiences of the learners and college staff, the end result was to understand and describe processes as well as experiences.

3.9 Ethical considerations

Following the University of Bristol's regulations and guidance, an application and ethical approval for the study was sought in February 2018 (Appendix 3) and was granted in March 2018. Approval was given by the University of Bristol's School of Policy Studies Ethics Committee. A number of ethical considerations were made as part of the planning for this dissertation.

Although the ethos behind the methodology is non-judgemental, client-centred and supportive in helping the college with decision making, the term 'evaluation' and the methods used to explore the college's processes (observations and interviews) meant there was the risk of participants feeling judged. As discussed (Stake, 1976), within education there are already systems and protocols in place which inspect and make judgements on the effectiveness of various aspects of the teaching and curriculum (e.g. Ofsted, 2019), and the stress of such assessments has been documented (Case, Case and Catling, 2000). The legacy of such experiences, not to mention the understandable human response to an unknown research approach which includes the term 'evaluation', may result in a level of discomfort or feeling the need to portray a positive or ideal picture ('participant bias'; Robson, 2002). To minimise such stresses and perceptions, the purposes and methodology of the study was

explained to the participants. This was carried out verbally when meeting with potential participants, in written form through the information sheets which the participants were able to take away and read at their own pace and verbally again before the start of the observations and interviews. Participants' understanding was checked and reassurance was given if necessary, for example, by reiterating that there was no right or wrong answers and that the focus was to explore their own personal experiences and gather an understanding of the process from different angles. Participants were also reminded of the confidentiality protocol and reassured that their views and comments would be anonymous in any transcripts, reports or texts.

Due to the recruitment processes used, the case study nature of the participant groups, the use of observations in Stage 2 of the research design and the practicalities of accessing the participants within the various college departments, there were limitations to the level of confidentiality and anonymity. To ensure informed consent was gained, the participants were made aware of such limitations at the start of the recruitment process and before any observations and interviews were carried out. To minimise the limitations, participants were reminded not to use the names of others as much as possible during the interviews and no names were recorded on any transcripts and texts resulting from the data. To protect the Learners' identities further, they were given the option of choosing a pseudonym.

Following the BPS (2018) Code of Ethics and Conduct, all participants were required to give informed signed consent and were given the option of withdrawal from the study at any point up to the 1st March 2019. Participants were informed that withdrawal after this point could have detrimental effects on the study. It was important that I was clear about my role as the researcher, both with myself and with the participants, and recognise my limitations and work within the capacity of that role. Participants, particularly members of staff, aware of my role as a Trainee Educational Psychologist, asked of my opinions at various points during the study in relation to other aspects of interest to them (e.g. their own professional skills during the meetings; support strategies for the issues raised). To account for this, I used reflection and drew on my learning throughout the study, as well as supervision and scripts to plan for such circumstances.

3.10 Chapter summary

The purpose of this study is to explore the processes which a post-16 educational setting uses to elicit and use the voices of the learners with EHCPs to inform their ARs. Chapter 2 provided the literature describing the legislative duties and psychological reasons for post-16 settings to carry out such processes, as well as describing the benefits and challenges encountered when accessing young people's voices. This chapter has provided the rationale and aims of the current study; a description

of the study's epistemological and ontological underpinnings; an explanation of the methodology chosen and how it was applied and carried out for this research project; a critique of the methodology and discussion of alternative methodologies; and a description of the ethical issues of the study.

I.E has been chosen as the methodology for the current study due to its social-constructivist, client-centred approach and recognition of the multiple complexities which affect the practical application of an innovation (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Stake, 1976; Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington, 1977; Burden, 2008). This was felt to align not only with the purposes of the study, but also the supporting psychological theories and moral and legal reasons for accessing young people's views (Rogers, 1967; Deci and Ryan, 1985; UNCRC; 1989; Children and Families Act, 2014) and the person-centred reforms of the Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015).

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the findings from the data analysis. It will include an explanation of how the data will be presented, a description of the data analysis used and conclude with a summary of the findings. The findings will aim to answer the research questions of this thesis:

- 1) What are learners' (with EHCPs) perceptions and experiences of the Annual Review process?
- 2) How do learning support workers elicit and use the learner's voice to inform the Annual Review process?
- 3) How do learning support co-ordinators elicit and use the learner's voice to inform the Annual Review process?
- 4) How might the college develop its processes for eliciting and using learners' voices to inform the Annual Review process?

During the research, teaching staff at the college were referred to interchangeably as 'tutor' and 'teacher'. Both roles have teaching duties and tutors have additional responsibilities such as registration, tutorials and general progress monitoring. All full-time learners have a personal tutor. For ease within this study, all teachers and tutors will be referred to as 'tutors'.

An overview of the college's AR process from start to finish can be found on page 93, which provides context and understanding.

4.1.1 Presentation of findings

Following the framework of Illuminative Evaluation (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Parlett, 1974; Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington, 1977; Burden, 2008), data gathering for the study was derived from five distinct sources:

- Interviews with four learners
- Interviews with four learning support workers (LSWs)
- Interviews with three learning support co-ordinators (LS Co-od)
- Observations of four AR meetings
- Examination of college documentation

The results of the research will be presented using the following approach:

Interviews with the four learners

Interview data for the learners will be presented at an individual level. This is to ensure the unique experiences of all four learners is acknowledged and represented. Following this will be an 'Overview of Findings' (Table 11). The intention of the overview is to identify the salient themes which encompass the similarities and commonalities which occurred across all four learners' interviews.

Interviews with the four LSWs and three LS Co-ods

Interview data for the LSWs and LC Co-ods was also analysed at an individual level and salient themes encompassing the similarities and commonalities across the LSWs' and the LS Co-ods' interviews were identified. Within this chapter, the salient themes for the two groups will be presented in order to address research questions 2 and 3. Details of the individual interviews from which the salient themes were derived are presented in Appendix 15 and 16.

Supporting quotes for the themes are included with relevant line numbers for the related transcript given in brackets.

Observations of four Annual Review meetings

Observations of the four learners' Annual Reviews were carried out. Data analysis followed Wolcott (1994) and Robson (2002), and includes:

- Description of the culture-sharing group i.e. the meeting;
- Analysis of themes of the culture through the observation of patterns of speech, action and responses;
- Interpretation.

Examination of college documentation

The college's documentation regarding their SEND support and ARs was examined. Drawing on the principles of content analysis (Robson, 2002, p. 353), and influenced by this study's research questions, the 'recording unit' of interest was 'learner' or equivalent term, and 'learner voice' or equivalent term. The purpose was to identify how the college documentation viewed the learner within the AR process.

Following the presentation of findings from the interviews, observations and documentation analysis, an explanation of the main findings for the four research questions will be given, including an overview of the AR process.

4.2 Interviews

4.2.1 Thematic Analysis

The thematic analysis chosen for the interviews was that of Braun and Clarke (2006), who state that due to the subjective nature of qualitative research, it is vital that the researcher is transparent. The six phases of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) and the key decisions and steps taken for each phase of the interview analysis can be found in Appendix 17

All transcripts, coding tables, candidate theme tables and the tables for the final themes with supporting quotes can be found with the attached memory stick.

4.3 Findings from the interviews

4.3.1 Interviews with the learners

The learners in this study all chose pseudonyms: Jane, E, Zac Efron and Pink.

4.3.2 Learner Jane

Within Jane's interviews, a main theme of 'Authenticity' was found with three sub-themes, as well as two other main themes.

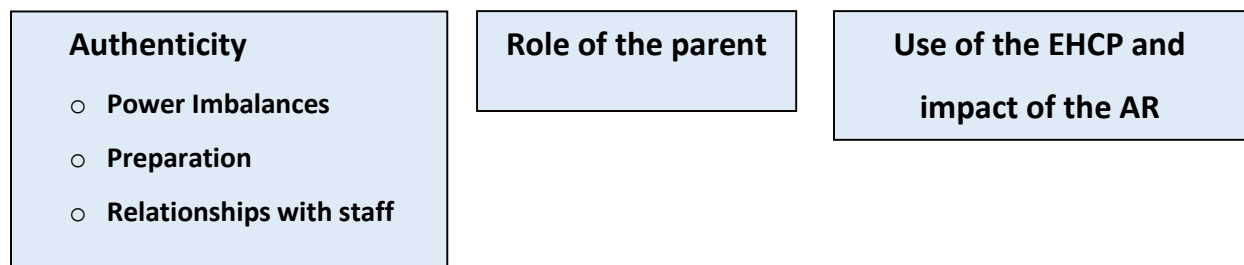


FIGURE 2: THEMES IN JANE'S INTERVIEW

Authenticity

Jane discussed several topics and issues which affected her ability for her to say how she 'truthfully' and 'honestly' felt.

- *Power Imbalances*

Jane felt that at times her feelings were not 'truthfully' represented because her exact words were not written and instead were presented in a formal or "polite" way. She was unsure if this was due to protocol or official guidelines for the paperwork and whether she was allowed to ask for it to be written differently.

Jane:...they tried to change the words up a bit so it doesn't seem as harsh as what I come out with but I'd rather just let them put down what I said so that other people then understand the truth (253 – 255)

Power imbalances and perceptions of teacher/learner hierarchy impacted Jane's ability to say how she would like to be supported. When wanting to leave the classroom to calm down, Jane stated she would rather do this on her own but her LSW or tutor would always come to check on her. Jane felt unable to express this in the meeting and was unsure if she was allowed to suggest it. The impact of this power imbalance extended to her choice in which questions were directed at her or her mother.

Jane:...some of the questions my mum got asked I wouldn't have minded answering them...but then I don't know if it was my choice...to answer them (272 – 274)

- *Preparation*

Lack of preparation this year meant that Jane felt "awkward" in the meeting because she had not had time to prepare for the expression of her feelings. The previous year, Jane had worked through the Student Feedback form in college with the LS Co-od on a one to one basis which gave her the chance to speak honestly. This year, the form was sent home which meant she was not as well prepared and unable to check the meanings of some of the questions.

Jane:...it was so awkward because like I had to come with like the truth and like the truth towards questions (76 – 77)

- *Relationships with staff*

Jane's relationships with the staff was significant. She spoke of the "bond" that existed between her, her LSW and her tutor and how she felt they understood her. For this reason, she preferred to speak to them about any issues rather than the Learner Support Services.

Jane: ...my tutor and the learning support person we have like a bond and we connected straight away...so...I know I can tell these people stuff...but down there I just feel it doesn't seem right (628 – 632)

However, this bond made it difficult for her to say how her support could be improved because she did not want to hurt their feelings.

Role of the parent

Jane had conflicting feelings regarding the presence of her mother at the AR meeting. Her attendance was important to Jane because it was an opportunity for her mother to know more about

her college life but it also caused embarrassment as she revealed information which Jane did not want shared.

Jane: like she should be there 'cause she should know how I'm getting on but then the other 50 bit is like please don't embarrass me (390 – 391)

Use of the EHCP and ongoing impact of the AR

Jane identified the importance of the AR for checking her progress and support, and liked having the opportunity to discuss the issues she was currently facing. However, the lack of observable changes or clarity regarding how the outcomes of the meeting are shared with her tutors left Jane doubting its importance or impact.

Interviewer: ...do you think anything will change as a result of that meeting

Jane:...my honest answer has to be a no I don't think nothing's gonna improve (398 – 401)

4.3.3 Learner E

Thematic analysis of the interview with learner E identified 5 main themes:

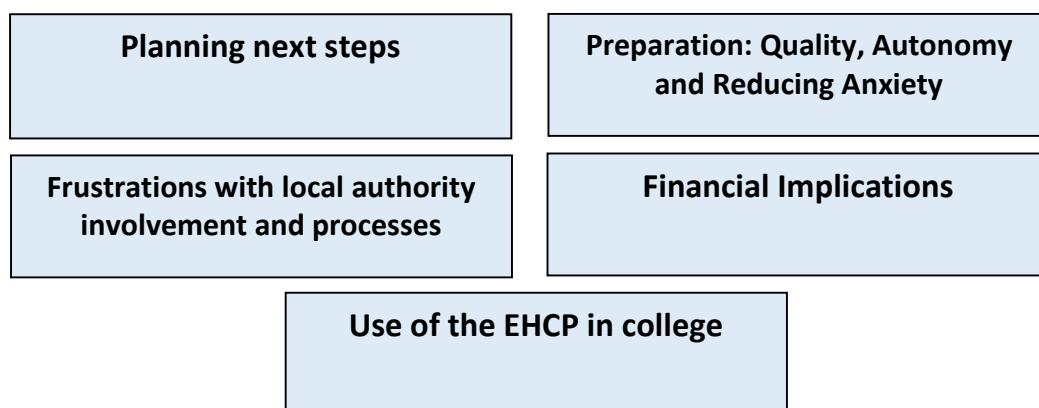


FIGURE 3: THEMES IN E'S INTERVIEW

Planning next steps

'Planning next steps' encompassed the benefits E identified of the meeting which was helping her to plan for the next academic year. Having the right people there helped her to gather the information she needed, take next steps and know what would happen with her support in college. For example, having a representative from the college she wanted to go to helped her check the relevance of the course and what she needed to do to apply.

Interviewer: is it helpful

E: Yea 'cause then you know what's actually going to happen maybe than not or what's relevant to me or not (165 – 168)

E also explained how some of the questions were unhelpful when planning next steps.

E: ...I think that the question on it that they ask everyone is...where do you see yourself...in the next 5 years well I maybe don't know ... (435 – 436)

Preparation: Quality, Autonomy and Reducing Anxiety

E explained how the amount of support and preparation she had for the meeting had decreased each year, from one to one support to the feedback form being sent in the post. She also felt there had been a lack of consideration for her feelings.

E: ...the first year I had someone help me do it the second year they just shoved it in my well in the classroom when...I was upset about something...and they think it was the right time to do it...where there were loads of people (82 – 86)

E also discussed how although she recognised the practical difficulties of arranging meetings, she would have liked to have more choice about who was invited and the time and date of the meeting.

E: ...I think you need to know who's coming...or what to expect from it...you might...be less anxious (461 – 476)

Frustrations with local authority involvement and processes

E was frustrated that despite being invited, a representative from the LA had not attended. This meant she could not check the details of her funding which impacted her ability to plan her next steps.

E: ...it didn't help that the council didn't come...because then you would have known if I was going to get funding for sure or maybe there might be a possibility of it (304 – 307)

She was also frustrated that the LA had taken several months to respond to AR paperwork and rarely made amendments to her EHCP. This which made it out of date and no longer relevant or useful.

Financial Implications

For E, the EHCP and AR process had financial implications and her frustrations with the LA can be further understood through this theme. E's child benefits would stop at the age of 18 and she had

wanted to check if she would still receive funding through the EHCP so that she could continue to focus on her studies and work towards a career without additional stress.

E: ...'cause I don't want a job yet til I've finished education because you want to develop want to focus on what you want to do in life to progress...your...career or what you want to achieve (386 – 387)

Use of the EHCP in college

E's EHCP appeared to only be used to access funding, as when ask if it was used for anything else, she replied, "Like for what?" (Line 354). This was further evidenced when she explained how her teachers had not known about the information on her EHCP and did not know the details of her needs and difficulties.

4.3.4 Learner Zac

Within Zac's interview, 5 key themes stood out:

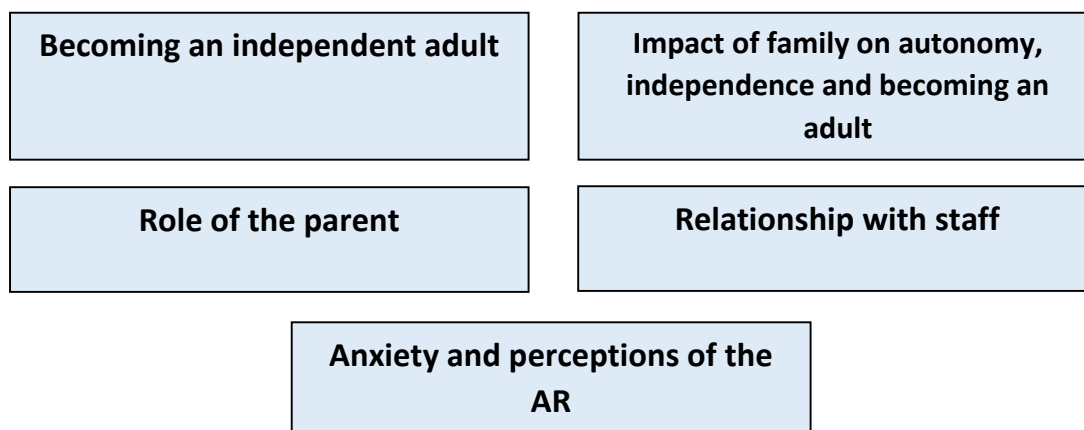


FIGURE 4: THEMES IN ZAC'S INTERVIEW

Becoming an independent adult

Throughout her interview, Zac demonstrated her keenness to embrace adulthood, increase her level of independence and be seen and treated as an adult. One of the purposes of the AR for Zac was to demonstrate her 'adulthood':

Zac:...it's to show the adult side of you (119)

Impact of family on autonomy, independence and becoming an adult

Zac spoke a lot about the frustrations certain members of her family caused her and how this impacted her ability to be an adult.

Zac: ...I mean I love them to bits...but they treat me like a kid (709 – 719)

Zac's frustrations with her family had been strong motivations for some of her choices in the AR.

Zac:...I only said I want to get a job on a Monday and a Saturday just cause of the consequences of my nan and my auntie (661 – 662)

Role of the parent

Zac spoke of her mother's presence at the meeting several times. She enjoyed hearing her mother's views as well as sharing her college life and tutor's perspectives with her, which Zac noted probably would not have happened otherwise. Her mother's attendance also provided reassurance for Zac.

Relationships with staff

Zac talked about her relationships with the college staff positively and how her relationship with her LSW was particularly important to her. Zac explained that she talks a lot to her LSW about the issues she has at home and how the LSW has had to comfort her at times. For these reasons, she identified her LSW as someone she would like to have at the AR for reassurance and to hear her views.

Zac: ...I tell xx (LSW) a lot of things what goes on (346)

Anxiety and perceptions of the AR

Zac felt nervous leading up to the AR meeting because she knew the focus would be on her and she was unsure what the staff would share about her. She was also worried that she would receive negative feedback from her teachers.

Zac: ...I was like...what they gonna say what they gonna say what they gonna say and given that I've got all good things all over it's like phew (457 – 458)

4.3.5 Learner Pink

Five main themes were found in Pink's interview:

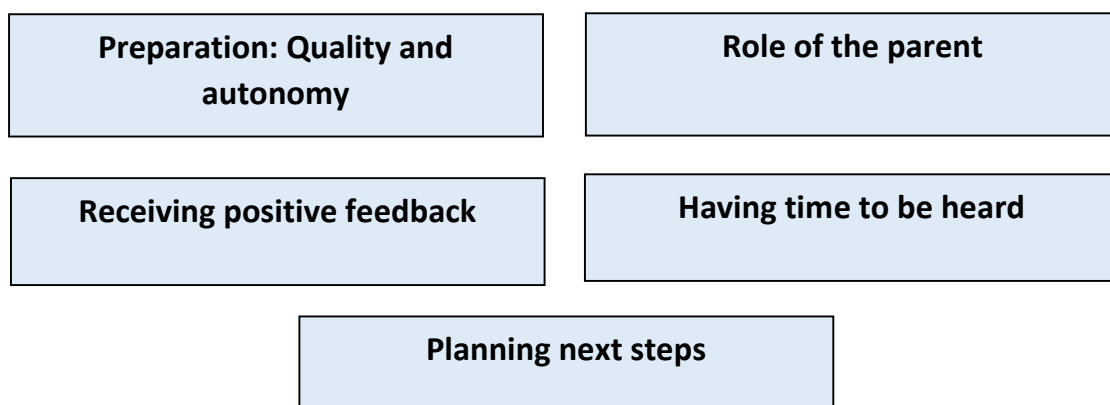


FIGURE 5: THEMES IN PINK'S INTERVIEW

Preparation: Quality and autonomy

Pink could not recall having any preparation for the meeting. Her knowledge of what to expect appeared to be based on her previous experiences of ARs and similar meetings.

Pink: ...I'm used to it because I used to go to lots of meetings when I used to be in school (31 – 32)

Pink was unfazed by the meeting and reported feeling “fine” in the run up to it. However, she would have liked a choice about the timing of the meeting.

Role of the parent

Pink's relationship with her mother was very important to her. When asked if there was anyone in particular she would want to invite to the meeting, her mother was the only person she named. One of the positives of the AR for Pink was getting to spend time with her mother.

Pink: I think it (*AR meeting*) went really well spend time with mum more I'm really attached to my mum (210)

Receiving positive feedback

Pink's overall experiences of the AR were positive and that it went well. Her experiences were partly due to the positive feedback she received from her teachers about her progress and the effort she was making in class.

Pink: there's a lot of things...how much I achieved when I was in college how much time and effort I get into my work (100 – 101)

Having time to be heard

Another positive of the AR for Pink was having the opportunity to share and discuss her concerns about her social and emotional well-being. Having enough time to talk about these concerns was also a strength of the meeting.

Pink: ...it was longer as well...you have more time to talk and give your ideas and stuff like that (227 – 229)

Planning next steps

Although Pink reported that she loves the college, she explained how she was ready to move on and get a job and felt that the AR would help with this. However, she was unsure exactly what the support for her next steps would look like in practice.

Pink: ...I haven't seen too much changes just yet but I just need to give it time first (202)

4.3.6 Overview of findings for the learners

Overview

Preparation

All four learners discussed issues relating to the preparation stages of the AR process. These included inconsistencies in the level of support for completing the feedback form; not knowing what to expect; not having a choice in what happens; not having time to think through their answers in advance or prepare for sensitive topics; and not having time to check their understanding of the questions.

Relationships with staff

All four learners recognised the impact that the college staff played in their AR process and support. Three of the four discussed how important their relationships with staff were in being able to share and discuss their thoughts and feelings.

Role of the parent

Three of the learners discussed the importance of their parents' attendance at their AR and the opportunity the meeting provides for sharing their college life and progress. In some instances, their parents provided reassurance and comfort. For two of the learners, their parents' attendance had the potential to make them feel uncomfortable by revealing information they did not want to have shared.

Use of the EHCP and impact of the AR

All the learners described the purposes of the AR as checking their progress and support. However, the ongoing impact was unclear. Only E could identify any specific actions resulting from the meeting (i.e. she had made her college application), but both she and Jane were confused about what happens with the paperwork, how the information is shared with their tutors and what changes would follow. Pink did not raise this explicitly but her answers suggested she would have to 'wait and see'.

Planning next steps

Three of the learners talked of how the AR provided an opportunity to plan next steps such as applying for a college course or getting a job. The steps they identified were within the next one to two years.

TABLE 11: OVERVIEW OF THEMES ACROSS THE LEARNERS' INTERVIEWS

4.3.7 Findings from the learning support workers (LSWs)

The salient themes found across all four interviews with the LSWs were:

- **Role in the AR process**
- **Preparing the learner for the AR**
- **Relationship with the learners**
- **Learners' anxieties**
- **Hierarchy of the LSW role**
- **Use of the EHCP and impact of the AR**
- **Role of the parents**

Role in the AR process

The LSWs reported that their role in the AR process is to provide information about learners' progress and development using the staff feedback form. Important information is also communicated to relevant staff members throughout the year, such as information gathered through their day to day interactions with the learners. There is no expectation for the LSWs to attend the AR meetings.

LSW3: ...you may get a tutor ask you what do you think you know have you noticed anything...but no not normally I've not been involved in any other way
(54 – 55)

LSW2 had been invited to AR meetings for the learners she had worked with a lot but had not been able to attend as they had not been on days when she worked. LSW1 had attended Jane's AR because she thought it was important due to her knowledge of Jane's academic and social and emotional needs, and to check she was supporting her the best she could.

Three of the LSWs thought it would be beneficial to have more involvement, either with preparing the learners or providing support and reassurance in the meetings.

Preparing the learner for the AR

There was a range of opinions and experiences reported regarding the preparation of learners for the AR.

LSW1 had not been involved in preparing the learners and felt that any preparation work should be carried out by someone who knows the learner well, rather than somebody from the Learner Support Services, and the learner should have more involvement. She was the only LSW who knew of person-centred planning, due to her previous roles as a support worker, and did not feel that Jane's AR process had been person-centred or considerate of Jane's feelings.

LSW1: ...she doesn't have a rapport with them downstairs...she says that she doesn't want keep...repeating stuff (219 – 221)

LSW2 had helped learners to complete their feedback forms and stressed the importance of giving learners a choice in how this is done, as some do not mind completing the form in class whereas others prefer to meet one to one.

LSW3 and 4 said that the tutors met with the learners throughout the year about their progress but were not aware of any specific preparation for the ARs. LSW4 suggested that giving learners too much preparation could be detrimental to the process as they prefer to see how the learners are progressing "naturally" (line 50).

Relationship with the learners

All four LSWs described how their relationships with the learners is different to the relationship the learners have with other members of staff. They explained it is often more informal and they provide emotional and pastoral support as well as academic guidance. LSW1 felt this helped to provide learners with a balanced, all-round support system.

LSW1:...it's almost like bad cop good cop (337)

As a result, the learners tend to open up and be more honest with them. This was part of the reason why they felt their role in the preparation stages or the meeting could be beneficial.

LSW2: sometimes they talk to us better than they would a tutor...we put them at their ease and they'll answer us better...(54 – 56)

Learners' anxieties

LSW1, 2 and 3 described how the learners can sometimes be anxious about their ARs. This is usually because they do not know what is going to happen and there can be lots of people there. LSW2 felt that E was unlikely to be anxious about her ARs because she had been to so many before.

Learners' experiences of the ARs, as described by LSW3 and 4, also seemed to be associated with perceptions of judgement regarding their progress and behaviour.

LSW3: it's quite daunting to be with a parent or carer then having to come in for a meeting then it's always that (*in-take of breath*) what have I done wrong (236 – 237)

LSW4: ...some of them are really looking forward to their reviews and...if they've done well they're chuffed (130 – 131)

Hierarchy of the LSW role

The hierarchy of the LSW role occurred throughout all four interviews, either explicitly or implicitly. LSW2 demonstrated this through her use of the term "higher grounds":

LSW2: ...I say I have to tell the tutor ... so the tutor's involved and then it will go on higher... you know to the higher grounds as I would say (443 – 447)

All four LSWs talked about the importance of them sharing information but 3 of them had experiences of others not viewing their input for the ARs as necessary.

LSW1: I'm with these students all the time and you...clearly think it's just important the tutor goes (304 - 305)

LSW3 reported the status of her role being the reason she does not attend ARs.

LSW3: ...you are a learning support worker...you're not the same...it's for the teachers to deal with (264 – 265)

Information and outcomes resulting from the ARs was only shared with the LSWs on a 'need to know' basis. Only LSW1 identified these perceptions of the role as an issue.

Use of the EHCP and impact of the AR

The use of the learners' EHCPs by LSWs varied. LSW1 did not know how to access the EHCPs and mostly based her support on her skills and experience. This was partly due to her preference for providing support through the development of trusting relationships with the learners and her understanding of them, but also because often the EHCPs are not shared until later in the year. She

also explained that EHCPs are usually out of date and so no longer helpful for informing support and do not represent the learner.

LSW1: ...I didn't even recognise her on paper (181)

LSW2 knew how to access the EHCPs but generally based her support on her professional skills and experiences of the learners. LSW3 referred to the EHCP throughout the year but did not refer to it when completing the Staff Feedback forms.

The ARs meetings did not have a consistent impact on the LSWs unless it directly affected their day to day support.

LSW3:...it's not always passed back to us we don't always know what's been implemented...(340)

Role of the parents

Two of the LSWs talked about the role and impact of the parents. LSW3 wanted more communication and joint working between her and the parents. She explained that she often communicates with parents via email but never meets them.

LSW4 described how AR's can be opportunities to engage parents in their young person's education, and can help realign their expectation and perceptions of their young person, either to raise them or make them more realistic.

LSW4: I think it opens eyes...(163)

4.3.8 Findings from the learning support co-ordinators (LS Co-ods)

The salient themes found across all three interviews with the LS Co-ods were:

- **Roles in the AR process**
- **Autonomy of the learner**
- **Learners' anxieties**
- **EHCPs and ARs: Issues of relevance, ownership and impact**
- **Person-Centred Planning**

Roles in the AR Process

All three LS Co-ods described their role for the ARs as co-ordinating the processes and supporting the involvement of the learners and their voices.

Coordinating the processes involved:

- administering the feedback forms (for the learners, parents and tutors/staff)
- gathering information from other agencies and professionals
- inviting parents, relevant college staff, other professionals and agencies, and the learners to the meeting
- collating the information and preparing the paperwork in advance of the meeting
- chairing the AR meetings
- supporting and leading the formulation of outcomes
- completing the AR paperwork after the meeting
- sending the paperwork to the LA, in liaison with the administration department
- ensuring any actions agreed at the meeting are shared and actioned

The LS Co-ods led much of the decision-making for the planning of the meetings, including who to invite. Attendees were chosen using a list of previous attendees or those named on the EHCP as having involvement. parents and tutors were also consulted. Learners could make a request to have somebody invited, but only LS Co-od3 spoke of specifically asking the learners this.

The two LS Co-ods from the SEND Department explained that either they, or somebody else the learner had a good relationship with, would meet with them to complete the Learner Feedback form.

LS Co-od2: it would...make sense to use that learning support worker because it means that the student is kind of relaxed...rather than me or a complete stranger...the answers you would get it would be completely different (61 – 63)

LS Co-od3 carried out this part of the process herself unless she was unable to due to time constraints and the volume of learners in her department with EHCPs (32 in total). LS Co-od3 would gather the learner's views during the meeting if she had not had time to meet with them, but would select learners she knew felt more comfortable doing this.

LS Co-od2 highlighted the need to have good listening and interpretation skills as the facilitator of the meetings. All three LS Co-ods spoke of being an 'advocate' for the learners and ensuring they were included in decision-making, by redirecting conversations back to the learner.

LS Co-od2:...you have lots of people talking about a student...rather than...involving the student as part of the...meetings (124 – 126)

Autonomy of the learner

The LS Co-ods explained that outcomes are generally formed and agreed upon through a process of discussing the previous outcomes or the learners suggesting something they are interested in or would like to achieve and the LS Co-od and other attendees suggesting ways to achieve it. It is rare for a learner to specifically suggest their own outcome, and LS Co-od2 explained that this is because they are unlikely to see how the actions and outcomes relate to their aspirations. Learners may sometimes need further explanations for how an action or outcome will benefit them, but no outcomes are signed off unless they are agreed to by the learner.

LS Co-od1 discussed how a learner's ability or lack of available support or local services can sometimes limit their choices.

LS Co-od1: ...yea definitely a struggle for some learners and I'll never say you can do anything if you put your mind to it...but there are ceiling limits on certain things...(363 – 365)

Learners are more likely to have a greater role and autonomy in the AR if they have a positive perception of their difficulties, are more confident or are more able. Some learners may even partly or fully chair their own meetings.

LS Co-od3: some students will embrace it and they want to share...the different ways that they learn (533 – 534)

The learners' awareness of their rights also differed. LS Co-od1 explained that learners who are less able, have needed a higher level of support and have not been around a variety of other learners are less likely to be aware of their changing rights at 16 and 18.

LS Co-od1:...they've probably been at specialist school from the age of two until 16 so they...have been in a really supportive environment...it probably...won't feel any different to them (427 – 429)

Two of the LS Co-ods talked about how a learner's autonomy can be hindered by their parents. This is sometimes due to a lack of parental support or awareness of the learner's preferences.

LS Co-od3: ...there are always lots of opinions being thrown around...sometimes I do have to step in and say...why don't you ask xx what she would like to do...I've actually had like parents arguing with each other saying well I think this is best (361 – 366)

At other times, learners have been reluctant to disagree with their parents out of fear, love or respect for their parent's wishes. In some circumstances, a learner's decision to cease their EHCP has created conflict between the parents and college as the parents have not agreed with the decision.

Learners' anxieties

All three LS Co-ods discussed aspects of the AR process which created anxieties in the learners. For example, learners not understanding the purpose of their EHCP or the AR process; having to attend a meeting with a range of people they may or may not know; negative perceptions of the process and the stigma attached to EHCPs; or having to talk about themselves or sensitive subjects.

LS Co-od3: ...it's quite an overwhelming process ...I feel like the purpose of the EHCP is still quite ambiguous...students don't really know...what it is...and how it's meant to support them (457 – 463)

Such anxieties can impact a learner's ability to engage in the process and speak openly and honestly.

LS Co-od1: we do have students that actually find it quite overwhelming so...they won't stay for the whole meeting (214 – 216)

LS Co-od2: ...lots of students don't really want to talk about themselves anyway let alone...in the context of their parents and there's a tutor and there's a doctor...that's where the prior meetings with the learning support worker for instance...get...a much more real picture (323 – 326)

All three discussed the importance of ensuring the learner feels comfortable in the meeting. In some cases, the learners may not attend the meetings at all and are met with separately on a one to one basis.

EHCPs and ARS: Issues of relevance, ownership and impact

All three LS Co-ods discussed issues within the legislation, LA and college which devalued the EHCPs and the AR process and a learner's ability to 'own' and make use of their support plan.

Issues within the LA meant that AR paperwork was not returned within statutory timescales. This could impact the learner's support, particularly if additional funding or services were needed. Often LAs did not make amendments to EHCPs as the changes were not considered significant enough, which rendered them out of date, ineffective for informing support and no longer representative of the learner. This led to learners becoming confused and disengaged with the process.

LS Co-od3: the students sit there and go this doesn't even represent me anymore it's not even me (474)

LS Co-od2 surmised how such issues devalued the purpose of seeking the learner's voice.

LS Co-od2:...the process itself...loses some importance when you realise that local authorities aren't necessarily acting on the views of students (776 – 778)

Two of the LS Co-ods raised issues regarding the lack of standardisation and legislative guidance and how this had created inconsistencies in practice and paperwork across the LAs. Such inconsistencies had presented the college with many challenges and led to them creating their own paperwork. LS Co-d2 suggested that if the EHCP was the same wherever the learner went and was always written in first person, this would help the learner have more ownership of the document.

Issues within college included the outcomes not being referred to regularly.

LS Co-od3: I've read out an outcome students have gone "I've never heard that before" ... "I didn't even know I was meant to be working towards that" ... "I don't even know what my EHCP is" (216 – 221)

LS Co-od2 suggested that EHCP outcomes should be referred to throughout the learner's lessons. Their EHCP and outcomes could then become a self-monitoring and learning tool. He also felt it would increase learners' understanding and engagement with the AR process.

Finally, the LS Co-ods did not think the learners noticed any changes to their support as a result of the AR, unless there were specific interventions or programmes implemented.

Person-Centred Planning

When asked about Person-Centred Planning (PCP), all three LS Co-ods discussed how their individual practice was driven by their belief in supporting a learner's goals and aspirations and by ensuring the processes and decision-making was informed by the learner.

LS Co-od3 used the PCP phrases 'Important to' and 'Important for' (<http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/>). When asked about this, she said she had learnt of the phrases from an external professional as opposed to being given any training on PCP. The LS Co-ods gave examples of PCP type approaches being used within certain departments and for other activities unrelated to the AR process. However, there was no agreed definition for the term PCP within the college, nor were there any specific processes or tools used to ensure a learner's voice was listened to.

LS Co-od3:...I wouldn't say that it's (PCP) on any of the paperwork...my approach to the meeting would be very person centred...but I'm not sure that...any others who attend would see it that way (236 – 238)

4.4 Observations

Following Wolcott (1994) and Robson's (2002, p.487) template, the data analysis of the observations was based on an ethnographic approach and used the following template:

- Description
- Analysis
- Interpretation

4.4.1 Description

The AR meetings took place at each of the learners' college campuses at 10:00am, 10:30am or 1.30pm and were held in classrooms. Attendees of the meetings included the following:

Attendees			
Jane's AR	E's AR	Zac's AR	Pink's AR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ LS Co-od3 (Chair) ○ Jane ○ Jane's Mother ○ Jane's tutor ○ Jane's LSW 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ LS Co-od1 (Chair) ○ E ○ E's Mother ○ External college representative (SEND Transitions co-ordinator) <p>Non-attendees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LA representative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ LS Co-od (Chair, standing in for LS Co-od2) ○ Zac ○ Zac's Mother and Step-Father ○ LS Co-od (Shadowing the chairing LS Co-od) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Education Support Manager (Chair, standing in for LS Co-od2) ○ Pink ○ Pink's Mother ○ LS Co-od (Shadowing the chairing LS Co-od)

TABLE 12: ATTENDEES AT THE ANNUAL REVIEW MEETINGS

Three of the meetings started with introductions. Pink's meeting started 30 minutes earlier than planned due to a change in the chairperson. I had not been informed of this which meant the start of this meeting was not observed. All the ARs followed the structure of the AR paperwork (See Appendix 10) and worked chronologically through each section. Jane's AR had two exceptions to this: the chair asked Jane's mother the questions for Section 6 ('My Family's Views') and 9 ('My Health Needs') in succession; and the chair returned to Section 12 ('Pathway Plan') after the other sections. At the end of the meetings, all attendees were asked to sign the paperwork and the Chair confirmed what would

happen next. Field notes of the observations can be found on the attached memory stick and full descriptions of the each of the observations can be found in Appendix 18.

4.4.2 Analysis

Preliminary analysis of the observations occurred by reading through the field notes and recording initial thoughts e.g. identifying which section of the AR paperwork the observation notes were referring to; noting who a question was directed at; identifying any questions which needed rewording for the learner; noting when a dialogue led to an agreement about an outcome or dialogue suggesting an outcome but the learner did not agree with it (recorded as 'T').

The next stage of analysis involved the development of codes for specific events and actions in order to identify any patterns and organise the findings from the data (Robson, 2002). The codes were based on actions of interest which were relevant to the research questions. The codes and events/actions are presented in the following table:

Code	Event/Action
A	Chairperson asks learner a question
B	Learner answers question from chairperson
C	Question is reworded, understanding is checked, examples given as prompts
D	Parent/s adds to the learner's answer
E	Parent answers for the learner
F	Parents expresses own thought, feeling or opinion
G	Parent asked a question by chairperson/other attendee
H	Parent answers question directed at them
I	Chair summarises section/discusses or reads through information/clarifies details
J	Learner speaks (unprompted)
K	General conversations between attendees, both with and without the learner
L	Chair asks for input/answer from attendees (in general/other than parent)

M	Input by college staff (e.g. tutor, LSW)
N	College staff add to learner's answer
O	Input from external agency/professional
P	Questions from external agency/professional
Q	Parent checks the answer with the learner
R	No response from learner
S	Parent asks a question of chairperson/others
T	Learner response to external professional/agency
U	Learner asks question

TABLE 13: CODING OF ACTIONS FOR OBSERVATION ANALYSIS

The observation field notes were read through again and the events and actions were coded (see PDF files on memory stick, File No.5). Patterns were identified and the number of times they occurred in the observation was recorded (NB: additional questions related to the checking of any further answers or thoughts, such as "Anything else?" are included with the original question being asked, and as such count as one question not two). The following section presents the patterns found within each of the observations, including the number of times they occurred.

Findings from Jane's observation

The following patterns were identified in Jane's observations:

Patterns of codes	Description of pattern	No. of occurrences
A - B	Chairperson asks learner a question - Learner answers question from chairperson	23 (inc. all other 'A - B - ' patterns)
A - R - C - B OR A - C - B	Chairperson asks learner a question - No response from learner - Question is reworded, understanding is checked, examples given as prompts - Learner answers question from chairperson	6
A - B - N	Chairperson asks learner a question - Learner answers question from chairperson - College staff add to Learner's answer	2

L - M	Chair asks for input/answer from attendees (in general/other than parent) - Input by college staff (e.g. tutor, LSW)	3
G - H	Parent asked a question by chairperson/other attendee - Parent answers question directed at them	8
J	Learner speaks (unprompted)	6 (inc. the 4 'F - J' patterns)
F- J	Parents expresses own thought, feeling or opinion - Learner speaks (unprompted)	4
H – M or F - M	Parent answers question directed at them / Parents expresses own thought, feeling or opinion - Input by college staff (e.g. tutor, LSW)	3
Q	Parent checks the answer with the learner	2

TABLE 14: CODING PATTERNS FOR JANE'S OBSERVATION

Code patterns which led to the formulation of outcomes:

Code pattern	No. of outcomes agreed through this pattern
A – B	4
A – R – D – L – M – B	1
A – R – E – A – B	1

TABLE 15: CODING PATTERNS WHICH LED TO OUTCOMES FOR JANE

Findings from E's observation:

The following patterns were identified in E's observations:

Patterns of codes	Description of pattern	No. of occurrences
A - B	Chairperson asks learner a question - Learner answers question from chairperson	10 (incl. other 'A – B – ' patterns)

A – B - D	Chairperson asks learner a question - Learner answers question from chairperson - Parent/s adds to the learner's answer	2
O – T OR O - U	Input from external agency/professional - Learner response to external professional/agency	6
A – B – C – E	Chairperson asks learner a question - Learner answers question from chairperson - Question is reworded, understanding is checked, examples given as prompts - Parent answers for the learner	1

TABLE 16: CODING PATTERNS FOR E'S OBSERVATION

Code patterns which led to the formulation of outcomes:

Code pattern	No. of outcomes agreed through this pattern
A – B	2
P – U – I - F	1

TABLE 17: CODING PATTERNS WHICH LED TO OUTCOMES FOR E

Findings from Zac's observation

The following patterns were identified in Zac's observations:

Patterns of codes	Description of pattern	No. of occurrences
A - B	Chairperson asks learner a question - Learner answers question from chairperson	19 (inc. the 6 'A – B- D' patterns)
A – B - D	Chairperson asks learner a question - Learner answers question from chairperson - Parent/s adds to the learner's answer	6 (added to A- B score)
A – C - B	Chairperson asks learner a question - Question is reworded, understanding is checked, examples given as prompts - Learner answers question from chairperson	4
A – C – B- C- E	Chairperson asks learner a question - Question is reworded, understanding is checked, examples given as prompts - Parent answers for the learner	1

G – H	Parent asked a question by other attendee - Parents answers question directed at them	7
I - J	Chair summarises section/discusses or reads through information/clarifies details - Learner speaks (unprompted)	5
I - F	Chair summarises section/discusses or reads through information/clarifies details - Parents expresses own thought, feeling or opinion	2
A – C – B - D	Chairperson asks learner a question - Question is reworded, understanding is checked, examples given as prompts - Learner answers question from chairperson - Parent/s adds to the learner's answer	1
A – E	Chairperson asks learner a question - Parent answers for the learner	5

TABLE 18: CODING PATTERNS FOR ZAC'S OBSERVATION

Code patterns which led to the formulation of outcomes:

Code pattern	No. of outcomes agreed through this pattern
A – B	2
A – E, then agreed to by the learner	1
A – B – D	1

TABLE 19: CODING PATTERNS WHICH LED TO OUTCOMES FOR ZAC

Findings from Pink's observation

The following patterns were identified in Pink's observations:

Patterns of codes	Description of pattern	No. of occurrences
A - B	Chairperson asks learner a question - Learner answers question from chairperson	71 (inc. all other 'A- B-' patterns)

A – B – D	Chairperson asks learner a question - Learner answers question from chairperson - Parent/s adds to the learner's answer	24
A – C – B OR A – B – C – B	Chairperson asks learner a question - Question is reworded, understanding is checked, examples given as prompts - Learner answers question from chairperson	8
I - J	Chair summarises section/discusses or reads through information/clarifies details - Learner speaks (unprompted)	14
F – J OR J- F	Parents expresses own thought, feeling or opinion - Learner speaks (unprompted)	9

TABLE 20: CODING PATTERNS FOR PINK'S OBSERVATION

Code patterns which led to the formulation of outcomes:

Code pattern	No. of outcomes agreed through this pattern
A – B	4
A – B – D	2
G - H	1

TABLE 21: CODING PATTERNS WHICH LED TO OUTCOMES FOR PINK

4.4.3 Interpretation

Data analysis of the observations showed that the majority of questions in the meetings were directed at the learner, as demonstrated by the number of A – B interactions (Jane = 23, E = 10, Zac = 19, Pink = 71). Answers given by parents or other attendees at the meeting mostly followed the pattern of allowing the learner to answer first and then either adding to their answer or suggesting ideas if the learner was unsure what to say. The only time a parent answered for a learner without allowing them to answer first was in Zac's observation, during which it occurred five times.

Questions were specifically directed to the parents in two out of the four ARs (Jane's and Zac's). These questions were for Section 6 of the paperwork ('My Family's Views'), Section 9 ('My Health Needs'), Section 10 ('My Social Care Needs') and Section 14 ('Personal Budget'). Zac's mother was also asked a question when going through 'My Outcomes' when discussing a health related outcome. Other instances in which questions were directed at attendees of the meeting, other than the learner, were to check if they agreed or if there was anything else they wanted to add.

Outcomes were mostly agreed upon via a direct 'A – B' interaction between the Chairperson and the learner. For example, outcomes were agreed this way 4/6 times for Jane; 2/3 times for E; and 4/7 times for Pink. Zac's were agreed directly between her and the Chairperson on half of the occasions (2/4). When looking through the observation notes, it can be seen that suggestions for outcomes generally occurred through a discussion of an existing outcome or a discussion of a topic raised at the meeting. The option of having this as an outcome would be discussed and then agreed with the learner.

Learners were supported to answer questions by having them reworded, rephrased or having examples or suggestions given by either the Chairperson or other attendees at the meeting. No other support aids were used within these observations.

E's meeting was attended by an external professional: a SEND Transitions Co-ordinator from the college she was interested in applying for. E and the external professional had a total of 6 interactions, which was just over half as many as she had with the Chairperson (10 'A – B' interactions).

Occurrences in which the learners spoke unprompted varied, from E having no occurrences, Jane having 6 occurrences (most of which followed input from her mother: 4/6 times), Zac having 5 occurrences (with all 5 following input from the Chairperson) and Pink's having 23 occurrences in total (14 in response to input from the Chairperson, 9 in an interaction with her mother).

4.5 College documentation

The following college documents were explored (Appendix 9):

- Guidance, Inclusion, Support and Transition Policy
- The college's Local Offer for SEND
- Learner Charter and Codes of Conduct
- Guide to the college's support offer for learners, parents and carers (Leaflet)

The number of times 'learner' or an equivalent term was referred to was counted for the first two documents. The second two documents were directed at the learner and so for these documents, topics and information using the terms 'learner' and 'You' were noted and counted. See Appendix 19 for the tables of data.

4.5.1 Findings

The strength of incorporating the results of the documentary analysis into the present study is that it provides a degree of insight into organisational priorities, and offers a specific context for the present research. Please see Appendix 19 for full details of the documentary analysis.

The main findings to emerge included:

- The use of the term learner was used mostly in reference to: meeting goals, aspirations, needs, and exceeding expectations; providing support and guidance; and monitoring and achieving progress and success (in total: 48 times)
- The use of the learner in reference to decision-making, being consulted with, liaison with, having autonomy and control occurred 9 times across the four documents.
- LSWs were included in discussions regarding the assessment and monitoring of the learner's progress with tutors.
- The use of the term 'person-centred' was referred to once within the Guidance, Inclusion, Support and Transition Policy, and once in the College's Local Offer. (see Appendix G of the 'Guidance, Inclusion, Support and Transition Policy', Appendix 9).
- 'Learner voice' or 'voice of the learner' was not used within the documentation.

4.6 Summary of findings

To provide the reader with an understanding and overview of the college's AR process, this section will start with a flow chart of the process from start to finish, as discovered through analysis of the three sources of information: interviews, observations and college documentation.

4.6.1 Flowchart of the college's AR process

Stage in the process	Actions	Source of information
1. Pre-meeting	<p>a) 'Parent/Carer Feedback' form sent to parents via the post. Parents/carers to return form to the college in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>b) 'Student Feedback' form given to students via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The post - Given in class to complete - Talked through with by a member of college staff while in class - Talked through with by a member of college staff outside of class - Views gathered during the AR <p>c) Tutors/LSWs/any other college staff asked to provide input and/or complete the 'Staff Feedback' form. Input based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experience of the learner - Based on their targets - Based on their EHCP targets 	<p>1a) Observations, Interviews, AR documentation</p> <p>1b) Interviews</p> <p>1c) Observations, Interviews, AR documentation, college documentation</p>

<p>2. Annual Review (AR) Meeting</p>	<p>a) Chairperson works through the AR paperwork:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - clarifies details - checks and discusses feedback from contributions - Asks learner further questions i.e. based on their original feedback; clarifying what they have said and checking details; and any additional thoughts <p>b) New outcomes and actions occur as a result of these discussions via the following process:</p> <div> <pre> graph TD A[Topic is raised through discussion] --> B[College staff suggests outcome or action] A --> C[Parent/carer /external professional or agency suggests outcome or action] A --> D[Learner suggests outcome or action or aspiration] </pre> </div> <p>c) Outcomes agreed/not agreed by:</p> <div> <pre> graph LR E[Outcome deleted due to completion/no longer relevant] F[Final dialogue between Chairperson and the learner following a discussion] </pre> </div>	<p>2a) Observations, Interviews with LS Co-ods</p> <p>2b) Observations, Interviews with LS Co-ods.</p> <p>2c) Observation, Interviews with the LS Co-ods.</p>
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3. Post-meeting	<p>a) AR paperwork is completed by the LS Co-od and sent to the learner's local authority</p> <p>b) Relevant college staff are informed of any actions they need to carry out, either via email, via Pro-monitor³ or in person.</p> <p>c) Any changes to provision are recorded on pro-monitor</p>	<p>3a) Interviews</p> <p>3b) Interviews, College documentation</p> <p>3c) Interviews, College documentation</p>
4. Post-LA correspondence	<p>a) Local authority sends a letter of confirmation to the college, parent/carers and the learner informing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No changes due to minor amendments suggested at AR, or; - Changes to EHCP due to major amendments in provision or change of placement - EHCP ceased 	<p>4a) Interviews, one observation in which this process was discussed</p>

TABLE 22: FLOWCHART OF THE COLLEGE'S ANNUAL REVIEW PROCESS

4.6.2 Summary of findings in relation to Research Question 1

What are learners' (with EHCPs) perceptions and experiences of the Annual Review process?

The themes found across the learner's interviews were:

- *Preparation*
- *Relationships with staff*
- *Role of the parent*
- *Use of EHCPs and impact of the AR*
- *Planning next steps*

The themes highlighted the need for careful preparation of the learner for the AR meeting; the need to consider the relationships the learners have with various staff members in the college and how they should be used in the AR process; the need to consider the role of the parent in the meetings;

³ Pro-monitor was the college's communication and information system which could be accessed by learners and staff. It contained information about the learners, including their EHCPs and learning targets.

confusion around the role of the EHCP and purpose of the ARs; the importance the learners' place on being able to use the AR to plan their next steps.

4.6.3 Summary of findings in relation to Research Question 2

How do learning support workers elicit and use the learner's voice to inform the Annual Review process?

The themes found across the LSWs were:

- *Role in the AR*
- *Preparing the learner*
- *Relationships with the learners*
- *Learners' anxieties*
- *Hierarchy of the LSW role*
- *Use of the EHCP and impact of the AR*
- *Role of the parents*

The themes highlighted the quality of their relationships with the learners, and the additional information they have as a result of this relationship. There was no explicit role for them in the AR other than providing feedback and for some, preparing the learner's via the Learner Feedback forms. The LSWs identified the impact that learners' anxieties can have on their engagement in the process and how the LSW role might help with this. Lack of involvement in the AR appeared to stem from perceptions of hierarchy. The use of the EHCP was varied and there was little impact of the AR following the meeting. Parental involvement in ARs was described as being both beneficial and detrimental to a learner.

4.6.4 Summary of findings in relation to Research Question 3

How do learning support co-ordinators elicit and use the learner's voice to inform the Annual Review process?

Themes identified across all four LS Co-od interviews included:

- *Roles in the AR*
- *Autonomy of the learner*
- *Learners' anxieties*
- *EHCPs and ARs: Issues of relevance, ownership and impact*
- *Person-Centred Planning*

The themes highlighted that LS Co-ods are involved with co-ordinating the processes, making decisions regarding the meetings and being an advocate and support for the learners. Autonomy of the learners is affected by their ability, awareness of their rights and impact of the parents. Anxieties of the learners can affect their engagement in the AR process. There are issues relating to the use and ownership of EHCPs and ARs caused by irregular use of the plans in college, wider systemic issues within the LA, and a lack of guidance and standardisation from the legislation. Person-Centred Planning (PCP) is not a term generally used by the college. Person-centred practices are generally driven by the skills and values of individual staff.

4.6.5 Triangulation of evidence: Observations

Data gathered from the observations supported the LS Co-ods' descriptions of how learners are supported and included in the meetings, and how outcomes are discussed and agreed e.g. topics are raised and discussed, suggestions are given for achieving it and learners make the final decision. Questions are directed at the learners in the majority of cases.

4.6.6 Triangulation of evidence: College documentation

Analysis of the college documentation supported the LS Co-ods' and the LSWs' descriptions of their roles in the AR process. Personalised/Person-Centred Planning was referred to 5 times and reflected the LS Co-ods' interviews that it is not generally a term used by the college and there is no college wide agreement for this approach.

4.7 Research Question 4

How might the college develop its processes for eliciting and using the learners' voices to inform the Annual Review process?

Using the data from the analysis of the interviews, observations and college documentation, key points were identified and the following recommendations were made to the college in line with Stage 5 of Illuminative Evaluation:

1. Greater involvement and choice for the learner in the preparation stages
2. Learner to be provided with feedback following the AR meeting
3. Greater awareness and teaching of learners' rights and learners' voice
4. Greater use of the EHCP outcomes in the learners' day to day education
5. Greater use of the role of the LSW
6. Have an agreed definition and approach to Person-Centred Planning
7. More information for parents about the AR and how to support their young person
8. An evaluation of LA processes and greater guidance and standardisation

Further clarification and information about these recommendations are presented within Chapter 5: Discussion, and a recommended model for eliciting and using the voice of learners to inform their AR meeting is provided on page No.125

4.8 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the findings of the data from all sources of evidence (interviews, observations and college documentation) and have been linked to the relevant research questions. The data analysis process for each has been explained (i.e. Thematic Analysis, Braun and Clarke, 2006; Robson, 2002; Wolcott, 1994) and a summary of findings for each research question has been provided.

The next chapter will provide a discussion of these findings in relation to legislation, psychological theory, literature and research on the inclusion and use of young people's voices.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to illuminate how a post-16 setting elicits and uses the voice of learners with EHCPs to inform their AR. Key people involved in the AR process (learners, LSWs and LS Co-ods) were interviewed, observations of AR meetings were carried out, and college documentation relating to the college's SEND processes were analysed.

This chapter will start with an overview of the main themes identified through the data analysis in response to each research question (see Table 23).

The chapter will then be structured around the research questions and the main themes of the findings: a summary of the main themes for each research question will be provided followed by a discussion of the findings in the context of the relevant topics raised in the literature review. Relevant aspects of the observations and documentary analyses will also be included.

In answer to Research Question 4, recommendations resulting from the findings to Research Questions 1, 2 and 3 will be discussed and presented in an illustrative model (Figure 6).

In accordance with Stage 5 of the methodological approach, Illuminative Evaluation (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Parlett, 1974; Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington, 1977; Burden, 2008), and described in Chapter 3, key findings were presented to senior staff of the college on 20th June 2019 to provide the opportunity for their response and a discussion regarding the potential areas for development. The final section of this chapter will include the college's response and next steps.

5.2 Discussion of findings in relation to the Research Questions

This study's research questions were:

- 1) What are learners' (with EHCPs) perceptions and experiences of the Annual Review process?
- 2) How do learning support workers elicit and use the learner's voice to inform the Annual Review process?
- 3) How do learning support co-ordinators elicit and use the learner's voice to inform the Annual Review process?
- 4) How might the college develop its processes for eliciting and using learners' voices to inform the Annual Review process?

The following Table 23 provides an overview of the main findings for Research Questions 1, 2 and 3 and the recommendations for Research Question 4:

Research Question:	RQ1: What are learners' (with EHCPs) perceptions and experiences of the annual review process?	RQ2: How do learning support workers elicit and use the learner's voice to inform the Annual Review process?	RQ3: How do learning support co-ordinators elicit and use the learner's voice to inform the Annual Review process?	RQ4: How might the college develop its processes for eliciting and using learners' voices to inform the Annual Review process?
Overall themes found across the participant group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation • Relationships with staff • Role of the parents • Use of the EHCP and Impact of the AR • Planning next steps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role in the AR process • Preparing the learner for the AR • Relationships with the learners • Learners' anxieties • Hierarchy of LSW role • Use of the EHCP and impact of the AR • Role of the parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles in the AR process • Autonomy of the learner • Learners' anxieties • EHCPs and ARs: issues of relevance, ownership and impact • Person-Centred Planning 	<p>The key points from the findings were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Greater involvement and choice for the learner in the preparation stages 2. Learner to be provided with feedback following the AR meeting 3. Greater awareness and teaching of learners' rights and learners' voice 4. Greater use of the EHCP outcomes in the learners day to day education 5. Greater use of the role of the LSW 6. Have an agreed definition and approach to Person-Centred Planning

				<p>7. More information for parents about the AR and how to support their young person</p> <p>8. An evaluation of LA processes and greater guidance and standardisation</p>
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TABLE 23: OVERVIEW OF THE MAIN FINDINGS

5.3 RQ1: What are learners' (with EHCPs) perceptions and experiences of the Annual Review process?

5.3.1 Summary of results

All four learners reported they would have benefitted from greater preparation for the AR meeting, such as knowing what to expect and having a greater role in decision-making. They identified key people who they have positive relationships with and discussed the importance of this for helping them to express their views. The involvement of their parents gave them reassurance and the AR provided an opportunity to share their progress and college life. Parental involvement could also raise anxieties in the learners. The lack of use of their EHCPs in day to day college life and lack of noticeable impact of the AR created some confusion regarding the purpose of the meetings. Issues with LA processes undermined the value and purpose of the EHCPs and ARs. Three of the learners talked about the AR helping them plan for their education, employment and independence.

5.3.2 Salient themes

The following discussion of the results for Research Question 1 will be framed within the salient themes of the findings:

- Preparation
- Relationships with staff
- Role of the parents
- Use of the EHCP and impact of the AR
- Planning next steps

Preparation

The college was fulfilling the requirement of the UNCRC (1989), Children and Families Act (2014) and the SEND Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015) in terms of seeking the learners' views for the purposes of creating outcomes based on their goals and aspirations. What appeared to need greater focus was the inclusion of the learners' views and preferences for the planning of the meetings and *how* they were consulted both before and during the meetings.

The results indicated that the college's practices were falling within the 'Tokenistic' rung of Hart's Ladder of Participation (1992). The learners were asked for their input before the meeting but the method for this (completion of the Learner Feedback form) was not consistently supported by a member of staff or in an environment in which the learner felt comfortable. This meant the learners could not clarify the purpose of the meeting and their role within it; check their understanding and

prepare for the questions; check who would be attending; or discuss details of the meetings such as how they would take part. In Jane's case, this resulted in her not completing the form at all.

The theme resonated strongly with the findings of Woolfson, Harker, Lowe, Shields, Banks, Campbell and Ferguson (2006), Woolfson, Bryce, Mooney, Harker, Lowe and Ferguson (2008) and White and Rae (2016), who found that the preparation stages for consultations with young people were crucial to its success. Concerns have been raised by professionals working with young people about giving them too much control in decision-making (Woolfson, Bryce, Mooney, Harker, Lowe and Ferguson, 2008; Roller, 1998; Rudduck, 2006; Hall, 2017). However, as E's comments highlighted, a learner's understanding of the practical and logistical implications of decision-making should not be underestimated. E understood the difficulties of planning the timings of the meetings but would have liked to have been consulted and stated that, *"you can't change it because you don't have the opportunity to"*. Providing learners with greater choice in the planning and preparation stages is supported by 'Self-determination' theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985), which argues that it is not control which is necessary but having a choice in the decision-making which helps keep a person engaged and motivated and avoids feelings of helplessness.

The consequences of not being fully prepared or understanding the purpose of the AR meant that three of the learners experienced anxieties as they were unsure who would be there, what information would be shared, and for Zac, whether she would be told off for doing something wrong. Interestingly, Pink had experienced the most ARs at the college and had reported feeling ok about it because she had been to so many meetings before. Observation analysis revealed that Pink spoke, unprompted, the most times out of all the learners. This supports Ingram's (2013) claims that young people need to be used to participating in consultations for them to effectively engage with them.

Relationships with staff

The learners all identified qualities in the various members of staff and their relationships with them and how this impacted their educational experiences. Three of the learners identified specific members of staff who they had particularly good relationships with and would like to have more involvement with their ARs to help them feel comfortable and more able to express themselves.

The importance of learners being able to speak with people they feel comfortable with is supported throughout the literature. Legislation insists that young people should be supported however necessary to enable them to be able to give their views, including the use of key adults (Children and Families Act, 2014; DfE/DoH, 2015). Rogers (1967) asserted that it is the relationship between therapist and client that is of greatest importance when supporting change.

The theme adds further support to previous studies which highlighted the importance of feeling comfortable and the impact social dynamics and relationships between learners' and teaching staff can have with task engagement, progress and achievement (Kubiak, 2017; Palikara, Lindsay and Dockrell, 2009). Further to this, studies have reflected on how it is the quality of the relationships between researchers and young people which has enabled them to access their voices (Dockrell, Palikara and Cullen, 2007).

Similar to Groom and Rose (2005) and Palikara, Lindsay and Dockrell (2009), Jane, E and Zac all named their LSWs as people they felt comfortable with, and Zac and Jane especially spoke about how important these people were in supporting their social and emotional needs. However, as the LSW interviews found, LSWs were not always considered for supporting learners to complete their feedback forms, and rarely were they invited or enabled to attend the AR meetings. If learners' views are to be accessed effectively, educational settings must ensure they consult with the young person about who they would like to meet with and need to allow for the fact that this might not be the members of staff designated for such processes. For example, for emotional issues, Jane preferred to speak with her tutor and LSW rather than the Learner Support Services⁴ because she did not feel comfortable with them. Following on from the previous theme, 'Preparation', and the related literature (Woolfson et al., 2006), choice is essential however, as despite her relationship with them, Jane would have preferred to speak with someone other than her LSW and tutor when completing the feedback form so that she could "*tell the truth*" when explaining how her support could be improved.

Role of the parents

Three of the learners talked about the impact and importance of having their parents at the AR meetings. Having their parents at the meetings provided an opportunity to share their progress and college life with their parents, have their reassurance, and for Pink, it gave her valuable time with her mother. These factors all contributed towards the AR being a positive and valuable experience. Conversely, for Zac and Jane, the presence of their parents also created feelings of embarrassment or anxiety due to the anticipated or actual sharing of information which they did not want shared in the meeting.

Although young people have greater rights and autonomy at 16 and 18 years of age, as the SEND Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015) states, parents may still be involved and, similar to these findings, the young people may still require or wish for their support. Their conflicted feelings regarding their

⁴ The Learner Support Services in the college provided support for both academic and social and emotional needs, such as a counselling service.

parents' involvement can be understood through the concept of 'power imbalances' when consulting with young people (Ashton and Lambert, 2010; Waller and Bitou, 2011; Ingram, 2013; Palaiologou, 2014; Hall, 2017) and also in relation to the initial theme of 'Preparation'. These incidences of embarrassment and anxiety could perhaps be better managed by providing greater clarity, not only for the learners, but also the parents, of the purposes of the AR and their roles and rights within it. Better preparation could also help the learners plan what information is and is not discussed.

Use of the EHCP and impact of the AR

The learners' comments regarding the use of their EHCPs in college and the lack of noticeable impact of the AR raises several concerns.

EHCPs are *legal* documents intended to inform a learner's support (DfE/DoH, 2015). The results found that not only were the EHCPs rarely used, some tutors had not seen the EHCPs at all. Furthermore, the purpose and benefits of using EHCPs as tools for learning and progress monitoring were being missed. Having clear goals and opportunities for self-monitoring can be highly beneficial and improve learner engagement, as Kubiak (2017) found.

Learners also noted the minimal impact of the AR after the meetings and Jane did not think anything would change. Only E gave a specific example of an action which had been carried out, which was applying for her college course. The reasons the learners gave for this related to issues within the LA as well as college, such as their EHCPs not being updated.

For the process of accessing learners' views for their ARs to move beyond the 'tokenistic' rung of Hart's Ladder (1992) to one with greater authenticity and efficacy, learners need to be part of the feedback process and see the impact of their involvement. The importance of this has been demonstrated and discussed by others (e.g. Rudduck, 2006; Woolfson, Bryce, Mooney, Harker, Lowe and Ferguson, 2008; Kubiak, 2017; Whitty and Wisby, 2007; Bahou, 2011).

Considering the recent changes to data protection and information storing (Data Protection Act, 2018), it could even be argued that the learners' rights were being compromised, as Jane's comments suggested: "*where does that information go?*"

Planning next steps

The learners viewed their ARs as an opportunity for them to plan their next steps and felt the meetings were helpful in doing this. This was a strength of the college's AR process, particularly as 'Self-Actualisation' theory (Rogers, 1967) stresses the importance of a person being able to realise and act

on their true feelings. It is also positive in the context of the legislative requirements, particularly with regards to the increased focus on preparing for adulthood at post-16 (DfE/DoH, 2015; Section 8).

The examples given, such as applying for a college course and getting a job and a bus pass, could all be considered 'hard' or 'concrete' actions. This is similar to Kaehne and Beyer (2009; 2014) in that it was the concrete outcomes which young people valued. What is noteworthy is that the timescales the learners focused on were within the next two years. Comments from LS Co-od3 argued that anybody might find it difficult to plan for longer timescales. Preparing for adulthood may require a longer-term vision but learners are likely to need additional support and preparation to do this. In particular, the question which asks what learners' would like to do in 'Five-Years' Time' on the AR paperwork (Appendix 10) may need reviewing, because as E stated, "*well I maybe don't know*".

5.4 RQ2: How do learning support workers elicit and use the learner's voice to inform the Annual Review process?

5.4.1 Summary of findings

The main role of the LSW in the AR process was to feedback information on learners' progress to the LS Co-ods for the AR meetings and for some, support the learners to complete the Learner Feedback form. There was no further expectation for their involvement. All the LSWs identified how their unique relationships with the learners helped them to open up more and having more of a role in the process could be beneficial. The LSWs described how learners can be anxious about their ARs. Positive experiences were related to receiving positive feedback. Perceptions of the LSWs' position in the hierarchy of the college became apparent and was identified by some as the reason they are not as involved in the AR process. The use and accessibility of the EHCPs varied amongst the LSWs. None of the LSWs felt the AR meetings had an impact on their support. The LSWs noted that they would like to work with the parents more and identified the ARs as an opportunity to re-align parental expectations.

5.4.2 Salient themes

The following discussion of the results for RQ2 will be framed within the salient themes of the findings:

- Role in the AR process
- Preparing the learner for the AR
- Relationships with the learners
- Learners' anxieties
- Hierarchy of the LSW role
- Use of the EHCP and Impact of the AR

- Role of the parents

Role in the AR process

The LSWs' role in the AR process appeared to be minimal and inconsistent. Primarily, their role was to communicate information about the learners via the Staff/Support Staff feedback form or throughout the year using informal and formal methods, similar to Norwich and Kelly et al. (2006), such as verbal means or the college's database system.

Although the LSWs might be informed of the AR meetings, they were not generally invited as a matter of protocol and their attendance was not always made possible, such as the meetings being on days they did not work (LSW2). LSW1 had attended Jane's AR because she thought it was important to. Three of the LSWs felt it would be beneficial for them to have more involvement due to the insight and knowledge they have about the learners.

The requirements of the legislation call for collaborative approaches for SEND (Children and Families Act, 2014; DfE/DoH, 2015) and effective planning and support for a person is described as having the '*right people*' with the '*right attitudes*' (Martin, Ouellette-Kuntz and Cobigo, 2013). The LSWs in this study, like others (McLachlan and Davis, 2013; McLachlan, 2014), demonstrated this commitment and passion.

The experiences of the LSWs were similar to Roffey–Barensten and Watt's (2014) who found it was rare for LSWs to be able to attend reviews. The potential dangers of the LSWs not being involved became apparent through comparisons of Zac's and LSW3's interviews and the observations of Zac's AR. In the meeting, Zac stated she wanted to get a job but her interview revealed the reason for this was to escape the demands of her family. She had confided in LSW3 previously about the impact of the issues ("*I chat to xx (LSW3)...and I think one Friday I just cried my eyes out*") but it was not clear whether these issues were known by others or would be addressed. Involvement of LSW3 at the meeting might have led to a wider understanding of Zac's situation and the planning of additional ways to support her, even if this was outside of the AR meeting itself. As Ware warned (2004), assumptions about young people's choices must never be made.

Preparing the learner for the AR

The LSWs varied in their responses regarding the preparation of learners for the AR, suggesting a range of practice and understanding across the college.

LSW1 had not been involved and felt the process had not been person-centred. LSW2 had supported learners with their Feedback forms and stressed that learners should have a choice in how they are

prepared. As others have found (Woolfson, Bryce, Mooney, Harker, Lowe and Ferguson, 2008), they understood that young people need to choose who they speak with and where they meet in order to feel comfortable enough to express themselves.

LSW3 and 4 were not aware of any preparation work at all. LSW4 even felt that too much preparation might be detrimental to the process and her answers suggested that the AR has an element of 'testing' or assessment: *"we like to see how they're progressing naturally"*.

Similar to previous findings (Blatchford, Russell, Bassett, Brown and Martin, 2007; Blatchford, Basset, Brown, Martin, Russell and Webster, 2009; Veck, 2009; McLachlan and Davis, 2013; McLachlan, 2014), LSW3's and LSW4's comments suggest that although they demonstrated a passion for their role, more training on SEND was needed to develop their understanding and fully implement inclusive practices. Better training for the LSWs could be beneficial, not only for the AR process, but for the quality of provision for all learners at the college, as McLachlan and Davis (2013) found.

Relationships with the learners

Previous studies illustrated the unique relationships LSWs often have with learners (Bailey and Robson, 2004; Groom and Rose, 2005; Veck, 2009; Palikara, Lindsay and Dockrell, 2009), and the findings within this study were no different. The LSWs explained how learners viewed them differently to other members of staff and how they support both their social and emotional needs as well as academic. Their relationships helped the learners to open up more: *"...they confide in me quite a lot"* (LSW4). All the LSWs recognised the benefits their relationship with the learners could bring to the AR process.

The LSWs' views were supported by the learners' comments, and the benefits are supported by psychological theory and previous research. As identified by Rogers (1967), it is the relationship between the helper and the person that is of most importance when working in a client-centred way, and speaking with a trusted adult is a preference of young people when being consulted (Woolfson, Harker, Lowe, Shield, Banks, Campbell and Ferguson, 2006; Norwich and Kelly et al., 2006). Again, choice is important: learners may identify other people who they wish to meet with and not all learners and LSWs will have these relationships, as Pink's comment highlighted, *"if they want to be there they can be there"*.

Learners' anxieties

The LSWs discussed the different reactions of the learners in relation to their ARs. Learners sometimes felt anxious about the meetings because they did not know what to expect. As previously discussed

here and in the literature (i.e. White and Rae, 2016; Kubiak, 2017), feeling comfortable is essential when consulting with learners, and greater preparation is a condition of this.

When discussing the learners' anxieties, LSW2 claimed that she did not think E would have been anxious about her AR because, *"she has had them before"* (LSW2). However, E revealed that she would have liked more preparation so that she might have been *"less anxious"*. As Norwich and Kelly et al. (2016) found, inconsistencies in consultative practice have been found across professionals and so such assumptions cannot be made, as previously argued (Ware, 2004; Ingram, 2013; Hall, 2017). Without thorough preparation, the learners are likely to continue to feel anxious about their ARs, which in turn will minimise their ability to effectively take part. Furthermore, such assumptions are likely to result in feelings of disempowerment (Ingram, 2013).

Another possible reason for the learners' anxieties could be explained by the comments of LSW3 and LSW4. They reported how some learners speak positively about their ARs and are *"chuffed"* (LSW4) with how they have gone. Although this is a positive, their examples appeared to relate to the learners having passed some form of assessment.

ARs are indeed part of the 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' approach to SEND (DfE/DoH, 2015) and it is undoubtedly a positive if learners can see progress towards their goals and aspirations. It must be remembered that the authentic use of young people's voices and best practice for PCP have stressed the importance of young people having equal status (Hart, 1992; White and Rae, 2016). Furthermore, the person needs to feel accepted and receive 'unconditional positive regard' to empower them (Rogers, 1959, Carver and Sheier, 2004). The findings here suggested there was a perception in the college of the AR meetings being predominantly a form of assessment, and so learners' positive experiences were because they had met a criteria or pleased the adults: *"...he said he did really well...it means they're hitting their targets...we're happy with them and they're happy"* (LSW4). LSW3's comments further evidenced this when she explained that learners who were *"a bit naughty"* may not feel as listened to.

The findings suggest that greater clarity is needed for both the learners and all teaching staff regarding the purpose of the AR process and the learner's role within it.

Hierarchy of LSW role

Throughout the interviews, the LSWs' hierarchy within the college became apparent. For example, their input for the AR was not always seen as necessary: *"it comes from the co-ordinator to come down to us...if it comes to us at all"* (LSW2), and information from the AR was only shared with them on a 'need to know' basis. The language used by the LSWs illustrated how other staff were perceived as

being on “*higher grounds*” (LSW2), and the LSWs were not involved in the ARs because “*it’s for the teachers to deal with*” (LSW3). Mostly, there seemed to be an acceptance of this, as “*that’s how it’s always been*” (LSW3). There were examples of good practice also, for example LSW4 stated, “*I absolutely love my job...and I feel valued*”.

Only LSW1 expressed any frustrations about the perceptions of the role: “*you...clearly think it’s just important that the tutor goes*” (LSW1). She explained that this lack of acknowledgement of her role combined with a lack of information about the AR and training in general, made her feel undervalued.

The findings paralleled much of the research into the role of LSWs and how they often feel undervalued (Roffey-Barensten and Watt, 2014); would like greater acknowledgement and training (McLachlan and Davis, 2013; McLachlan, 2014); and such perceptions of the role can create exclusive rather than inclusive practices (Veck, 2009). As Devecchi and Rouse (2010) state:

successful inclusion of students is dependent on how schools as organisations and communities are able to support the inclusion of adults as well (p.91)

Raising the status of the LSW role through greater acknowledgement and training could have a significant impact on the learners and their level of inclusion. Not only could the college’s AR processes be improved, but it would also strengthen the college’s collaborative approaches for SEND (Children and Families Act, 2014; DfE/DoH, 2015) and their support for the learners generally.

Use of the EHCP and Impact of the AR

Use of the learners’ EHCPs varied across the LSWs. In general, the EHCPs were not used to inform practice and the LSWs’ support was mostly based on their professional skills and the rapport and knowledge they built up of the learners. LSW1 explained that often, EHCPs are shared as more of an afterthought. Two of the LSWs spoke of referring to the EHCPs on occasions. Reference to the learners’ EHCPs had not been necessary for the completion of the learner feedback form (LSW3). Most of the time, the AR meetings did not have an impact on the support they gave the learners.

The findings are concerning when the requirements for evidenced-based approaches for SEND support and the statutory nature of EHCPs (DfE/DoH, 2015) are considered. It is not the professional skills of the LSWs which are being questioned here but the college’s accountability of ensuring they are delivering the appropriate, evidence-based support for SEND. Furthermore, the validity of reviewing the outcomes of an EHCP at an AR meeting is reduced if it is not known whether the support outlined in the EHCP has been fully implemented.

As others have warned (Hart, 1992; Fielding, 2001; Mansell and Beadle-Brown, 2003a; Rudduck, 2006; Whitty and Wisby, 2007; Bahou, 2011; Hall, 2017), the authenticity and effectiveness of accessing a young person's voice is dependent on them seeing the impact of their involvement. The value of the AR meeting and the learners' engagement in the ARs process is likely to have been lessened by the lack of impact on the LSWs' practice. As reflected in the learners' interviews and summed up by Jane: *"...nothing's changed"*.

Wider systemic reasons for why the EHCPs were not being used to inform support included the plans being out of date and no longer being valid as a means of informing practice: *"It was almost like we were reading...about a different person"* (LSW1). The vast number of learners with EHCPs within an authority can understandably make it financially and logistically difficult to update every plan each year. However, the reforms placed statutory duties on LAs to carry out ARs (DfE/DoH, 2015; Section 9.166). The issues in the system undermine the value and efficacy of the EHCPs, as well as their economic viability, and others have critiqued the government for putting the reforms in place without the necessary funding and support (Moore, 2019; Tirraoro, 2019). Bronfenbrenner's Eco-systemic theory (1979) provides a useful model for illustrating how these wider systemic issues impact a learner's SEND support and development by affecting the ability of educational settings and teaching staff to fulfil their statutory obligations.

Role of the parents

Two of the LSWs talked about the impact of parents in the AR process. LSW3 said she would like to have more communication between her and the parents of the learners she works with. Although learners have more autonomy at 16 and 18 years of age, as previously stated, the legislation acknowledges the continued support that parents may provide and stresses the need for collaborative approaches (Children and Families Act, 2014; DfE/DoH, 2015). The learners' comments also suggested that the role of the parents must be considered carefully.

LSW4 talked of the potential for ARs to engage parents in their young person's education and how the meetings can help to realign the expectations of parents, either to raise them or make them more realistic. Her comments paralleled some of the benefits found regarding person-centred planning (e.g. Wigham et al., 2008), such as people having an *"altered perception of participant"* (p. 147).

The findings highlighted two areas of parental involvement: collaborative working between parents and LSWs, and the role of parental engagement in learners' support. Parental involvement was not explored in detail in this study but is a worthwhile area for future research, particularly in relation to the complexities of young people's increasing rights post-16. With regards to this study, collaborative approaches involving both the LSWs and the parents is a potential area of development for the college.

5.5 RQ3: How do learning support co-ordinators elicit and use the learners' voices to inform the Annual Review process?

5.5.1 Summary of findings

The LS Co-ods role in the AR process was to gather and collate information from the learners and anybody involved in their support; prepare the paperwork; arrange the time and location of the meetings; invite attendees; chair the meetings; disseminate information and paperwork after the meetings; and ensure any actions resulting from the meetings are followed up. All LS Co-ods saw their role as being an advocate of the learner's voice. A learner's autonomy in the AR process and their awareness of their rights was affected by their own perception of their needs and difficulties; level of cognitive ability; previous educational experiences and exposure to other learners; and relationship with their family. Actions and outcomes resulting from the AR must be agreed to by the learner. The use of the EHCP and impact of the AR is undermined by issues within the college, LA and legislation. All LS Co-ods described their practice as being 'person-centred' but there was no agreed definition, policy or practice within the college for working in a person-centred way.

5.5.2 Salient themes:

The following discussion of the results for Research Question 3 will be framed within the salient themes of the findings:

- Roles in the AR process
- Autonomy of the learner
- Learners' anxieties
- EHCPs and ARs: issue of relevance, ownership and impact
- Person-Centred Planning

5.5.3 Discussion of findings

Roles in the AR process

The role of the LS Co-ods within the AR was to co-ordinate the processes from start to finish and chair the meetings. Much of the decision-making was led by the LS Co-ods. Although the LS Co-ods explained that the learners were welcome to invite anyone they would like to attend, only LS Co-od3 talked about this being a consistent and explicit part of the process. They all discussed the importance of knowing the learners and using this to guide their decision-making, such as when to suggest a learner leaves the meeting if they can see they are starting to look uncomfortable.

The conflicting values of SEND co-ordinators taking the lead in processes which are intended to be person-centred have been raised before (Maher and Vickerman, 2017), and in light of previous discussions in this chapter, this is an area of consideration for the college. The learners wanted more of a role in the decision-making, not just for their goals and aspirations but also within the planning stages of the AR. Legislative guidance (DfE/DoH, 2015), psychological theory (Rogers, 1967; Deci and Ryan, 1985) and previous research (e.g. Woolfson, Bryce, Mooney, Harker, Lowe and Ferguson, 2008) supports this. Further still, studies have shown the capacity and skills young people have for leading on projects and decision-making (Rome, Hardy, Richardson and Shenton's, 2015). Greater involvement in the planning stages would also avoid the issues of authenticity and power imbalances (Ware, 2004; Ingram, 2013; Hall, 2017) which can occur when assumptions about a learner's preferences are made.

The LS Co-ods were similar to the reports of SENCOs (Maher and Vickerman, 2017), in that they viewed their role as being an 'advocate' of the learners' voices, and discussed the various ways they did this such as speaking on behalf of the learners if required; re-centring the conversations back to the learner and their preferences when necessary; supporting them to participate by re-wording questions; and ensuring they understood what was going on. Their comments were supported by the field-notes and analysis of the AR observations. Having good listening skills was identified as necessary when chairing the meetings and acting as an advocate.

be a good listener cos there is...lots said...it's important to be able to know
what's been said and to challenge it if appropriate (LS Co-od2)

The focus on the learner was a strength of the college's AR meetings but what the college needs to ensure is that the interpretations and representations of the learners' views are accurate and understood. As LS Co-od2 put it, the current system for checking the learners' felt listened to was a "*woolly process*".

Examples from the learners' interviews and observation analyses demonstrated the issues which can occur when learners' choices and preferences are not fully checked or understood. The example given earlier demonstrated how it was not clear whether the upset Zac's family was causing her (and the real reasons behind wanting a job) would be addressed. Jane reported how the LS Co-od at her AR was good at summarising and rewording what she had said into a more succinct and "*polite*" version. However, she would have preferred her words to be written exactly as she had said them because she felt that this way, "*other people then understand the truth*".

Beaver (2011) reasons that the meaning behind a young person's words cannot be gained simply by recording them verbatim, but it can be argued that allowing the learners' a choice in how their views are written affords them equal status and greater 'ownership' of the documents. Additionally, all words are subject to the reader's own interpretation of them, as social constructivism teaches (Crotty, 1998; Creswell and Creswell, 2018). At least this way, their words are only open to one level of interpretation, which is that of the reader's.

Jane also demonstrated feelings of disempowerment in her interviews which became apparent in the observation analysis but which LS Co-od3 was not aware of. In the meeting, LS Co-od3 was keen for Jane to access the Learner Services to support her with the emotional issues she was facing, but Jane explained in her interview that she would prefer to be supported in another way but had not been sure if she was allowed to ask for this.

Such examples evidence the need for professionals to provide the necessary conditions for learners to express themselves fully and feel understood. Learners need to be practised at being part of consultations (Roller, 1998; Ashton and Lambert, 2010) and well informed of their role and rights within the AR process, including knowing how to challenge the ideas of others (Ingram, 2013). The meanings behind learners' choices need to be fully understood through a process of checking and 'co-construction' (Waller and Bitou, 2011; Herps, Buntinx and Curfs, 2013; Hall, 2017), and by ensuring their views are accepted, valued and given equal status throughout (Rogers, 1967; White and Rae, 2016).

Autonomy of the learner

The findings from the LS Co-ods' interviews revealed that not all learners at the college were equal in terms of their level of autonomy. Reasons for this varied, including their cognitive ability, previous educational experiences, and the type of relationship and support they had with their parents. Their reports paralleled previous studies which identified the impact of cultural and professional attitudes and practices and young people's cognitive ability on their autonomy and inclusion in decision-making (Ashton and Lambert, 2010, Norwich and Kelly et al., 2016).

The findings raise both ethical and legal concerns. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Eco-Systemic model illustrates how the complex interactions between the culture and society both within and surrounding the college and home environment were impacting the learners' rights and autonomy. Some learners were either unaware of their rights or prevented from being able to express them as equally as other young people. LS Co-od1's discussion regarding the "ceiling limits" on learners' choices also mirrored Kaehne and Beyer's (2014) concerns regarding equal opportunities and the need for improved services and support.

Legislation makes it clear that in order for young people to make informed decisions, all possible and reasonable steps need to be taken for them to do so (Mental Capacity Act, 2005; Children and Families Act, 2014; DfE/DoH, 2015). Studies have demonstrated the ability of young people with a range of needs to engage in consultations and lead on processes and practices when given the right skills and support (Carroll and Dockrell, 2012; Rome, Hardy, Richardson and Shenton, 2015; Kubiak, 2017).

The LS Co-ods in this study expressed their passion for supporting learner autonomy but their comments suggested that more could be done in terms of raising learners' awareness of and ability to express their views and have autonomy. For example, when asked if the learners ever suggested their own outcomes, LS Co-od2 reflected that this was "*an interesting question*" and reasoned that it might be difficult for some learners to make the link between an outcome and their goals and aspirations. However, with greater practice and experience of having their views heard and responded to (Whitty and Wisby, 2007; Bahou, 2011; Fielding, 2011) and awareness of the purposes of their EHCP outcomes; their changing rights post-16; and their role in the AR process, learners could be enabled to have greater autonomy, and the issues of equal opportunities could start to be addressed.

The LS Co-ods' comments relating to the impact of the parents also suggested the need to inform and remind parents of the importance of allowing young people to take the lead on decision-making, and is a possible area for further investigation.

Learners' anxieties

Consistent with the other participants' findings, the LS Co-ods identified anxieties in the learners in relation to their ARs. Reasons given included having to talk about sensitive or personal issues; having to talk to a group of adults (some of which they may not know); and having a lack of understanding about the EHCP and AR process. Such anxieties resulted in some learners attending part or none of their meetings at all. They acknowledged the impact this can have on accessing learners' views, and LS Co-od1 and 2 spoke of the benefits of the learners meeting with someone they knew well when completing the feedback form. The LS Co-ods discussed the importance of creating an informal, relaxed atmosphere for the meetings and having good relationships with the learners in order to help them feel comfortable and know how best to support them.

Again, the findings support the need for learners to feel comfortable and as White and Rae (2016) state, "adaptations should be made to ensure the meeting works for the child in question" (p.49). An area of development for this college is having an agreed and consistent approach for how to do this and to ensure assumptions about a learner's levels of comfortableness are not made.

Within LS Co-od3's department, she explained how she supported the learners to complete their feedback forms but that it was not always possible to do this due to the number of learners she coordinated. To manage this, learners who she perceived as being more comfortable in the meetings would have their views gathered then, as opposed to beforehand. Jane was one such learner and her interview revealed how "*awkward*" this had made her feel.

The discussions in this chapter and the findings from the literature (i.e. Rogers, 1967; Woolfson, Bryce, Mooney, Harker, Lowe and Ferguson, 2008) offer a possible solution to LS Co-od3's challenges and way of improving the AR processes for the learners at this college: they need to be given a choice in who they meet with. This could help reduce the number of learners LS Co-od3 has to meet with as well as providing the enabling conditions for learners to be able to speak openly and honestly and successfully engage in the AR process.

Some of the learners at the college were reported to have disengaged from their EHCP and the AR process completely. LS Co-od3 made the point that for some learners, EHCPs carry a negative stigma. Similar reactions to SEND and the stigma it entails have been found with students at university (Kendall, 2016). Eco-systemic theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) demonstrates the influence of the social and cultural messages learners receives and how this impacts their view of their SEND. The findings suggest the need for further research into young people's perceptions of EHCPs, for example in relation to the Social Model of Disability (Oliver, 1990).

EHCPs and ARs: issues of relevance, ownership and impact

Several issues were reported by the LS Co-ods which they felt devalued the EHCPs and AR process, and affected the ability of the learners to engage and 'own' their plans.

A lack of standardisation and guidance for the processes and paperwork was noted as a barrier to the successful inclusion of learners in the AR process. For example, the LS Co-ods explained how the college had to create its own set of AR paperwork to streamline the process, as each LA they worked with (of which, there were up to 6) had a different format. Norwich and Eaton (2013) discussed how organisations have been found to adopt tools and approaches which may have a limited evidence base when faced with a lack of clarity or guidance. The new Code calls for 'evidenced-based' approaches to be taken when supporting SEND (Section 7.14, DfE/DoH, 2015). A pertinent example of this in the findings was the use of effective questioning for consulting with the learners, especially as both LS Co-od3 and E raised the difficulties and efficacy of the 'Five Years-Time' question (see Appendix 10). It is understandable that professionals would like greater guidance and information to ensure they are delivering evidenced-based approaches. In the context of post-16 settings in which staff have a range of qualifications (NUS, 2013) and the role of the SENCo is not formalised (DfE/DoH,

2015, Section 7.22), as was evident in the profiles of the LS Co-ods in this study, the need for greater clarification and standardisation may be even more important.

As articulated by LS Co-od2, having an agreed and standardised set of paperwork could address the issues faced by the college and increase the ability of learners to 'own' their EHCP documents and the AR process:

"I think to have...an EHCP document that is the same...wherever you wanna go...it's just simple guidelines".

Issues within the LA had also been experienced, such as LAs not upholding their statutory duties of responding to and returning AR paperwork within the specified deadlines (see Section 9.176, DfE/DoH, 2015). In some cases, this meant requests for additional services or funding were not being answered which in turn impacted the learners' support.

The Code (DfE/DoH, 2015) states that:

As part of its commitments under articles 7 and 24 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the UK Government is committed to inclusive education of disabled children and young people and the progressive removal of barriers to learning and participation in mainstream education (Section 1.26)

The findings from this study reveal that issues within LAs were *creating* barriers to learners' education and progress. Similar to the learners' and LSWs' findings, the LS Co-ods also reported a lack of amendments being made to EHCPs, with some remaining unchanged for several years: *"you'll get ones back that xx has had from school...stuff that isn't relevant anymore"* (LS Co-od2).

Such issues and unlawful practices have been raised by others (Weddell, 2015b; Boesley and Crane, 2018; Palikara, Castro, Gaona and Eirinaki, 2019; Tirraoro, 2019), and Moore (2019) reported how one Labour MP asserted that the legislative reforms (i.e. DfE/DoH, 2015) were put in place by the government without the necessary processes and funding to support them.

The LS Co-ods also identified issues occurring within the college which created barriers to the learners' levels of engagement and ownership of their EHCP and AR. The lack of regular use of their EHCPs and outcomes meant that there was a *"break down"* in the system of EHCPs being used as a *"live document"* to inform support and being *"owned"* by the learner (LS Co-od2). There was also very little impact noted for the learners in terms of their support as a result of the AR.

Considering the statutory nature and fundamental principles and purposes of the EHCP and AR process (DfE/DoH, 2015), this is an area which warrants development within the college, as was noted by the LS Co-ods. As well as the legal requirements, the opportunities for the EHCPs to be used as a tool to support the learners' progress and development were being missed, particularly in light of studies which documented how learners' have identified the benefits of having clear goals to increase their engagement and motivation in a task (Kubiak, 2017).

If actions do not occur as a result of the learners' input in the AR meetings, there is the danger of an "implementation gap" (Mansell and Beadle-Brown, p.5) and the lack of impact of the AR is likely to lead to a general lack of engagement with the process (Hart, 1992; Fielding, 2001; Rudduck, 2006; Whitty and Wisby, 2007; and as previously discussed within this chapter).

Again, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Eco-systemic model is relevant for explaining how the issues within and between the college, the LA and national legislation are impacting the learners' 'ownership' of their EHCPs and involvement in the AR process. Such issues need to be addressed at all levels for improvements to be seen.

Person-Centred Planning

The LS Co-ods were passionate about their beliefs and values of working in a way which supported the learners' goals and aspirations and facilitated their involvement in the AR process. LS Co-od1 affirmed this in her comment: *"they're absolutely the whole point in why we're all here"*.

What was identified by the LS Co-ods and evident in the college documentation was the lack of a college wide definition and approach for PCP. Literature has shown that adopting a specific framework for PCP is not necessarily what makes it successful (Robertson et al., 2007a) and furthermore, the evidence-base for PCP is limited (Ratti, Hassiotis, Crabtree, Deb, Gallagher and Unwin, 2016). However, what is necessary is thorough preparation of the participants (White and Rae, 2016); a skilled, committed facilitator (Robertson et al., 2007a; Sanderson, Thompson and Kilbane, 2006; Robertson et al., 2007b); and a pre-existing ethos and body of staff which is committed to the values of PCP and carrying out the actions agreed in the meetings (Robertson et al., 2007b). These conditions are all similar to those found to effectively involve young people in consultations generally (Woolfson, Bryce, Mooney, Harker, Lowe and Ferguson, 2008).

Pockets of good practice across the college were described by the LS Co-ods and the skills and practices of the LS Co-ods themselves, as evidenced within the themes of their individual interviews, were akin to PCP (Sanderson, Thompson and Kilbane, 2006; Martin, Ouellette-Kuntz and Cobigo, 2013). For example, their identification of the need for the right person to be involved in the preparation stages

(as described by LS Co-od1 and 2) and the re-directing of conversations back to the learners within the meetings (LS Co-od3). LS Co-od3 even discussed her use of the PCP phrases: 'important to' and 'important for' (<http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/>) which, as she explained, she learnt from an external professional who had attended AR meetings.

Despite the lack of evidence base and legislative guidance, both the requirements of the Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015) and psychological theory (Rogers, 1967) advocates for the use of PCP when developing, assessing and reviewing SEND support for young people. A consideration for this college may be to develop and agree a college wide definition and set of approaches which can be shared, followed and understood by all members of staff as well as by the parents and learners, to ensure enabling conditions for the effective involvement of learners' voices in the AR process.

5.6 RQ4: How might the college develop its processes for eliciting and using learners' voices to inform the Annual Review process?

Information used to answer Research Question 4 was based on the findings from the interviews combined with observations and documentary analysis. The following is a set of recommendations for the development of the college's processes for involving the learners' voices in the AR process. A model for this process is also presented (Figure 6; p.125).

5.6.1 Recommendations for Practice

1. Greater involvement and choice for the learner in the preparation stages

Learners should be involved in the planning and decision-making for the AR meetings and be given greater choice. This can be achieved by answering the following questions:

- Who?
 - Who do they want to complete the Learner Feedback form with?
 - Who do they want to attend the AR meetings? This can include parents or any other person they wish to support them. Confirm attendees with the learner prior to the meetings.
- What?
 - Explain the purposes of the meeting to the learner, the basic format of the meeting and topics to be discussed, and their rights and role within the meeting. Support learners in knowing how to challenge any points they disagree with in the meeting or check their understanding.
 - What would the learner like to discuss in the meeting? This could be through consulting directly with them or adding additional boxes to the Student Feedback

form e.g. a list of their subjects with tick boxes for them to indicate which ones they particularly wish to discuss; an additional box for 'anything else' they wish to discuss.

- What questions on the AR paperwork would they like to answer in the meeting?
What questions should somebody else answer and who?
- What have they discussed in the preparation stages or at other times with the college that they do not want to be discussed at the meeting?
- Where?
 - Where would they like to carry out the preparation work?
 - Where, if possible, would they like to have the meeting?
- When?
 - When would they like to do the preparation work?
 - When, if possible, would they like to have the meeting?
- How?
 - How would they like to complete the feedback form? (e.g. One to one? In tutorial? Supported by a friend?)
 - How would they like to take part in the meeting? How would they like to present their views? Presentation? Speak themselves? Have an advocate? (If using an advocate, their message needs to be constructed together and the meaning checked with the learner). How long would they like to attend for?
 - How would they like to have their views recorded on the AR paperwork?

2. Provide feedback to the learner regarding the AR meeting

Learners need to be aware of and be given feedback on what has happened as a result of the AR meeting. Ensure learners understand what happens next in terms of sending the paperwork to the LA, how the information will be stored and shared with the staff and what will happen in terms of the actions and their support. A follow up meeting, for example four to six weeks after the AR, could provide the learner with feedback regarding any actions which have been put in place and check with the learner if there is any else they wish to change, add or clarify. This would be best carried out by somebody the learner would prefer to meet with. Regular 'mini-reviews' could also be implemented throughout the year. See also 'No. 4' for further discussion regarding the regular use of EHCP outcomes.

3. Greater awareness and teaching of learners' rights and learners' voice

The UNCRC (1989), Children and Families Act (2014) and the SEND Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015) are significant pieces of legislation which affect young people's lives and if they are to affect real change, then it is essential that the young people for whom they are written are aware of and understand them.

To do this, the college should consider ways to increase all learners' awareness of their rights in relation to all aspects of their education and decision-making, including those relating to SEND and their increasing autonomy post 16. The teaching of these reforms could be provided through lessons on citizenship or within tutorial sessions, for example. In addition to teaching learners about their rights, issues around the stigma attached to SEND could also be addressed through greater awareness and acceptance of differences.

For learners to develop their self-awareness and their 'voice' regarding their life and aspirations, learners will need ongoing opportunities to reflect on, adapt, and change their views over time through guided conversations. Learners with SEND will likely need additional time and will need adaptations and supportive resources to enable them to access and engage in such activities.

4. Greater use of the EHCP outcomes in the learners' day to day education

Practices regarding the regular use of the EHCPs within the college need to be addressed. If learners are to gain the full benefits of their EHCP, be familiar with their outcomes, and be fully engaged with and see the purpose of their AR, the outcomes in their plans need to be referred to regularly throughout their day to day educational experience, as opposed to once a year. As discussed by the LS Co-ods, the outcomes could be combined with the learners' curriculum 'SMART' targets, which all learners in the college have and tutors refer to regularly. Furthermore, the targets could be used throughout their lessons as a self-monitoring tool. This could have the additional benefit of supporting learners to see the links between their outcomes and the achievement of their goals and aspirations.

5. Greater use of the role of the LSW

All three participant groups highlighted the importance of learners speaking with somebody they feel comfortable with and the LSWs were identified as staff who the learners often have this relationship with. However, their role in the AR was minimal and inconsistent.

It would be beneficial for the college to have greater consideration of the role of the LSW in the AR process, before, during and after the meetings, in order to capitalise on this relationship. The benefits of this would be improvements in the college's collaborative approaches including the strengthening

of the communication and joint planning with the parents; the strengthening of the LSWs' skills, knowledge and practice for SEND; ensuring the actions and evidence-based practices stated on the learners' EHCPs are being implemented at every level; and improvement in the learners' experiences throughout the AR process which would aid the ability of the learners to fully and effectively express their views.

When developing and implementing this recommendation, it is of course necessary to consult with learners and check their preferences. The level of involvement an LSW has with a learner's AR must be determined by the learner.

6. Have an agreed definition and approach to Person-Centred Planning

The college does not necessarily need to adopt a pre-determined model or framework for PCP, but to ensure the quality and consistency of practice across the college and anyone involved in the AR, it would be beneficial to have an agreed definition and approach for PCP. This could be created through a consultation process, not only with the staff but also with the learners, to establish what they believe PCP means for them, how it can meet the needs of the learners in this college, and how it fits with the pre-existing principles and ethos of the college. From this consultation, a set of guiding principles and practices can be established, not only for the AR process but also for the college's general approach to supporting the learners' educational and personal development. This can then be shared with the learners, all members of staff including any external professionals working with the college, and the parents.

7. More information for parents about the AR and how to support their young person

It would be beneficial for the college to provide parents with more information about the AR process, and both theirs and their young person's role and rights within it. This information could include an outline of both the legislative and psychological principles and benefits of providing learners with the opportunity to take the lead on their education and the associated decision-making. Advice could be provided for how to support their young person with this, particularly with the AR process, such as checking with their young person what information they do and do not want shared in the meetings. Avenues of support for the parents' concerns could also be re-iterated as part of this information.

8. An evaluation of LA processes and greater guidance and standardisation

LAs and the government need to be accountable for the impact the issues within their systems are creating for both the learners and the college. Since the start of this project, one of the LAs which fed into the college developed a SEND Transitions team to take on the responsibility and processes for the ARs and were starting to address some of the issues by recruiting more case officers. Part of their role

was to attend the AR meetings; ensure more in-depth reviews of the AR paperwork was carried out and update plans more regularly; and return the paperwork within statutory deadlines (DfE/DoH, 2015).

The issues this college faced were not unique to one particular LA and similar frustrations have been reported and raised in studies across the UK and within various educational settings (Weddell, 2015b; Boesley and Crane, 2018; Palikara, Castro, Gaona and Eirinaki, 2019; Tirraoro, 2019; and Moore, 2019). For the principles and requirements of the SEND Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015) to be upheld and the barriers to the education of learners with SEND to be removed, both LAs and the government need to be accountable for their practices and processes and address these systemic issues.

Greater guidance and standardisation with regards to how ARs should be carried out, the paperwork that is used for ARs and the way EHCPs are written and formatted also needs to be provided. Although the process needs to be individualised and tailored to the needs of the learner, there is a growing body of research and evidence for how best to support learners throughout consultation processes and to ensure their voices are effectively and authentically included in decision-making (e.g. Sanderson, Thompson and Kilbane, 2006; Woolfson, Harker, Lowe, Shields, Banks, Campbell and Ferguson, 2006; Woolfson, Bryce, Mooney, Harker, Lowe and Ferguson, 2008; Sanderson, Thompson and Kilbane, 2006; as well as this dissertation). This information needs to be part of the statutory guidance to ensure a consistent, streamlined and evidence-based approach for all LAs, colleges and other educational providers.

Finally, the standardisation of the EHCP document would increase the ability of learners to own their plans. EHCPs could be tailored to a learner's preferences by consulting with them on details such as whether it is written in first or third person, with the added benefit of a standardised format so that they can take it to whichever LA or setting they go to, and both them and the setting would be familiar with its use and purposes. In this way, the documents would remain 'person-centred' rather than 'process-centred'.

5.6.2 Model for eliciting and using the voice of the learner in the Annual Review process

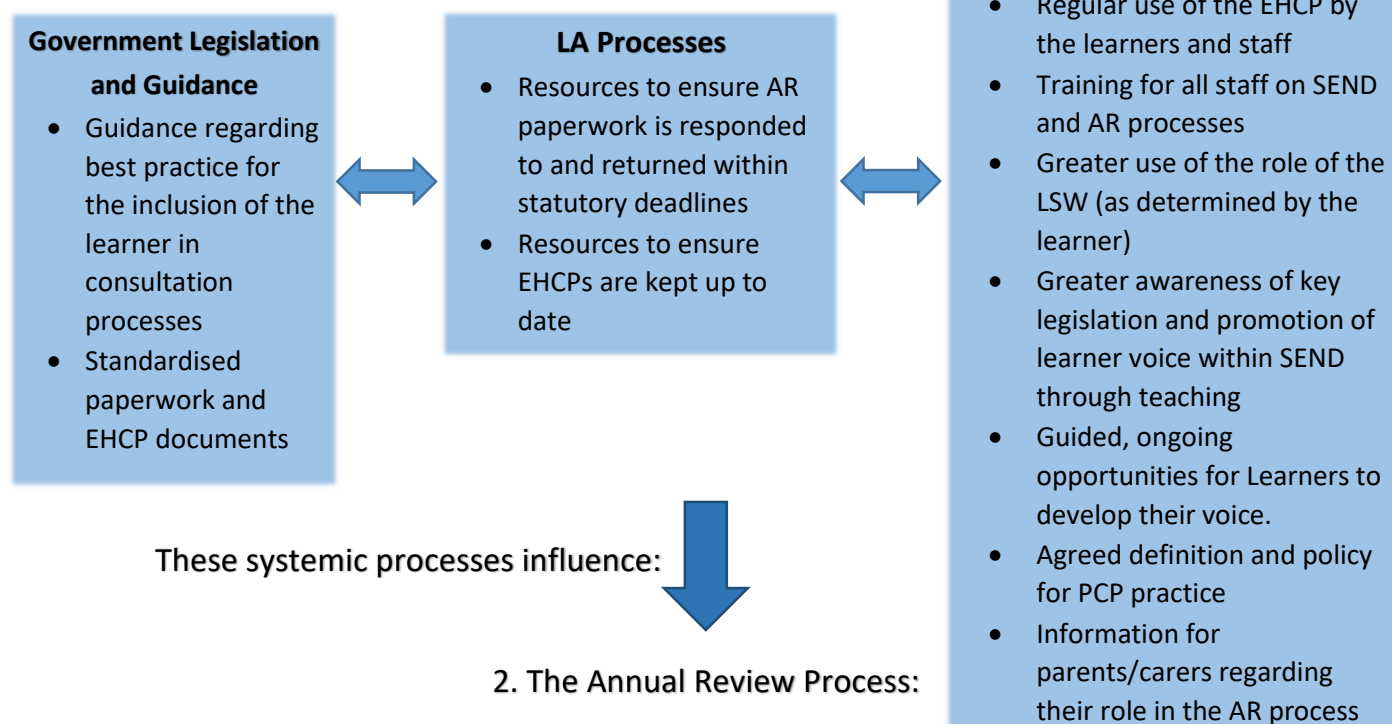
For the learner voice to be authentically heard and included in the AR process, the college needs to establish a set of enabling conditions. These conditions can be summarised as:

- Fully preparing learners for the AR process
- Giving learners choice in the AR processes and practices
- Providing feedback and ensuring learners are aware of the impact of their involvement

Figure 6 presents a model for these recommended processes and enabling conditions:

Eliciting and Using the Voice of the Learner for the Annual Review process

1. General Systemic Processes



Preparation of the learner

- Preparation for the AR which answers the Who, What, Where, When and How questions
- Preparation to inform learners about the purpose and structure of the process, and their role and rights within it.
- Preparation to provide the learner with choice relating to the planning stages of the AR (including the processes and for the meeting itself).

AR Meeting

- Structure to be informed by the decisions and preferences of the learner
- Chairperson (if not the learner) to be trained in facilitating the inclusion of the learner in the meeting
- All attendees to be informed of the PCP approach of the college and the meeting
- Learners to be informed of what will happen next (e.g. paperwork and actions)

Follow up

- Learners to have feedback regarding the actions which have been implemented or are due to be implemented
- Discuss with learners any progress on actions and additional changes or information

FIGURE 6: MODEL FOR ELICITING AND USING THE VOICE OF THE LEARNER IN THE ANNUAL REVIEW PROCESS

5.7 College's response

In accordance with Stage 5 of Illuminative Evaluation (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Parlett, 1974; Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington, 1977; Burden, 2008), the key findings from the data was fed back to the college. A meeting was arranged for 20th June 2019 and attended by the Education Manager, LS Co-od1 and the college's link Educational Psychologist. Appendix 14 shows the agenda for the meeting, the main findings which were shared and a write up of the discussions with the college.

The meeting with the college concluded with their initial thoughts.

5.7.1 Initial response from the college

The following presents the college staff's initial thoughts and the points which they planned to share at the upcoming Cross Campus Processes Meeting in July 2019:

- Amend learner feedback forms to include a 'free text box' to give learners the opportunity to state their preference on the meeting agenda
- Learners to be asked in the first term who they would like to attend their reviews
- Discussion of a guide to the AR process for learners

5.7.2 Final response from the college

Following the Cross-Campus Processes Meeting in July 2019, the college emailed with their final actions resulting from the study and their response to the data:

- Invite LSWs to apply for a new post of 'Lead practitioner' allowing certain key LSWs to be more involved with the learner journey to undertake Initial On-Programme Reviews⁵ and build a greater relationship with the learners. It is hoped that this will allow Lead practitioner to attend the reviews
- A new letter to be sent out with the review invites which breaks down the purpose of the review into an easy format.

The college also reported the following as action points which were raised at the meeting and indirectly informed by the findings:

- The introduction of a SEND surgery to increase the confidence in staff supporting learners with SEND
- The introduction of EHCP workshops to teach staff about the review/EHCP process so they have a better understanding of their role in the review

⁵ Initial On-Programme reviews were held with all learners six weeks after the start of the academic year. This was to check their progress with settling in, discuss their courses and discuss their targets and goals.

- EHCP outcomes to be uploaded to the staff systems with a view that tutors assess progress made against them at regular intervals throughout the year with the learner (not just at review time).

5.8 Chapter summary

This chapter has provided a discussion of the findings in relation to the four research questions of this thesis and has presented a model for 'Eliciting and Using of Voice of the Learner for the Annual Review process'. In accordance with the methodological approach, feedback on the study was given to members of the senior leadership team and the college's response to the findings has been presented.

In order for learners' voices to be effectively and authentically included in the AR process, a set of enabling conditions at the legislative, LA and college level need to be present.

A conclusion of this thesis is presented in the following chapter, including an overview of the findings, strengths and limitation, quality criteria and personal reflections of the study.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter will be to present an overview of the previous chapters and the key findings of this dissertation. Implications for practice, including Educational Psychology, will be discussed and suggestions for future research will be outlined. The strengths of the study and limitations will be explored followed by a review of the quality criteria. Finally, the chapter will conclude with an account of my personal reflections and concluding comments.

6.2 Overview of the findings

Key findings from the data revealed that certain enabling conditions need to be present for learners to fully engage with their ARs and have their voices part of the decision-making process. These conditions need to occur at national legislative, local authority and college level.

At the legislative level, greater guidance and standardisation of the paperwork and practices for the AR process is required to ensure that practitioners are using consistent, evidence-based approaches. This would help to increase the ownership a learner has over their EHCP by increasing its familiarity and the understanding of its purpose and use. Additionally, learners should be offered the choice of how their views are represented in the document.

At the LA level, services need to be improved so that AR paperwork is returned within statutory deadlines. This would help learners to feel their input has been valued and ensure that any potential barriers to learners' progress are avoided. LAs also need to review their processes for updating EHCPs. Such changes will require the support of wider government initiatives.

At the college level, EHCPs need to be referred to regularly by both staff and learners, so that learners have a greater understanding for how they support their goals and aspirations. In turn, this will help learners to have a better understanding of the AR process and increase their level of engagement.

Within the AR, key areas identified were the preparation and follow up stages of the process. learners need to have better preparation by being able to meet with an adult of their choice and in an environment they feel comfortable. They need to be clearly informed of the purpose of the meetings and what to expect. Learners also need more choice regarding the planning of the meetings and being explicitly asked how they would like to be involved and who they would like to attend. Following the meetings, learners need to be informed of what will happen next and how the information will be shared. Learners should have feedback meetings to discuss any actions which have been put in place so far. Again, learners should have a choice of who they meet with. Greater preparation and choice would minimise learners' anxieties regarding the meetings.

The role of the LSW within the AR process was minimal. This was a significant finding as all participants identified the importance of relationships for facilitating learner voice and the LSWs were found to have unique, nurturing relationships with many of the learners in the college. The role should be given greater consideration within the AR process and given more training on SEND processes. Once again, their level of involvement must be determined by the individual learner.

Person-centred planning (PCP) was found to be a general ethos of individual staff members' practice, rather than a defined, college wide approach. Having an agreed definition for what it means to this college, the learners and the processes for its delivery would ensure a consistent approach for the ARs and wider college practices.

Strengths of the college's AR process were that the learners viewed their AR meetings as opportunities to plan next steps. The LS Co-ods and the LSWs all described and demonstrated their passion and commitment to supporting learners with SEND.

6.3 Implications for practice

The methodological approach of this study has illuminated both the strengths and areas for development of the AR process for this college. As an outcome, it has provided a set of recommendations for practice and a model (see Figure 6, p.125) for the set of enabling conditions required for the authentic and effective inclusion of learners' voices.

Although this research has taken a case study approach, many of the issues found relating to the legislative reforms and the systemic issues within LAs have been raised by others (Weddell, 2017; Boesley and Crane, 2018; Moore, 2019; Palikara, Castro, Gaona and Eirinaki, 2019; Tirraoro, 2019). Likewise, many of the themes found such as the roles of the LS Co-ods and LSWs, the significance of relationships in facilitating learner voice and the need for greater preparation parallel the findings of the literature review. These wider similarities add weight to the possibility that the recommendations provided here could be a useful starting point for all educational settings, from Early Years through to post-16, when developing their AR process and eliciting the voice of the learners.

One such implication for practice relates to the issues raised in the literature review regarding the lack of training and clarity for the new processes set out in the Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015; Boesley and Crane, 2018; Palikara, Castro, Gaona and Eirinaki, 2019). It is hoped that the descriptions of the AR process provided in Chapters 4 and 5, as well as the flow chart presented on p.93 and the model on p. 125, help to de-mystify and provide greater clarity for the AR process and the inclusion of learners, not just for those working in educational provisions, but for all professionals and agencies involved.

Another implication for practice is the possible solution to the challenges many SENCOs face who work within in larger educational settings and have a vast number of EHCPs and ARs to organise. As outlined in the recommendations for practice (p. 120), learners need to have more choice over who they meet with and training on learner voice and SEND processes should be provided for all members of staff. In this way, the responsibility of the AR process and the inclusion of the learners can be shared amongst all staff, rather than it remaining with a small number of people or one person in the SEND department. The benefits wider systemic approach to ARs and inclusive practices in general is clear, and is also part of the statutory guidance for the Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015, e.g. Section 7.22).

In terms of Educational Psychology practice, the changes to legislation opened up an area of education which was generally unknown to the profession as a whole (Atkinson, Dunsmuir, Lang and Wright, 2015). The findings here provide an insight for EPs into one aspect of SEND processes for a post-16 setting and the challenges which the practitioners face. The descriptions and recommendations provided in this study can not only help to inform EPs' understanding of post-16 practices but also their consultations with the professionals and young people in these settings. The information provided in this study also provides EPs with a greater understanding of post-16 settings more generally through the descriptions and information presented about the college. For example, the various roles and staffing structures which may exist within a post-16 setting; the range of skills and qualifications of the staff; the variety of courses that are potentially provided; and the vast number of learners and types of learners (full-time, part-time, off site etc.) who may be enrolled at the setting.

A further implication for EPs is the area of training which is needed and which EPs could provide. EPs could be involved in the training of staff on the legislative and psychological underpinnings of accessing young people's voices. This could be in relation to the AR process in particular, but could also relate to other areas aspects of the SEND process and to the use of young people's voices more generally and for a range of purposes and age groups. Such training could benefit a multitude of professionals and settings working with young people for a range of reasons. In turn, this information could be adapted by teachers and other practitioners for the purposes of teaching all young people about their rights and the importance of having a voice.

In terms of the methodological approach, this dissertation demonstrates how I.E is an effective approach for research within Educational Psychology. Following the structure outlined by Parlett and Hamilton (1972) and Burden (2008), this study demonstrates I.E.'s strengths as a methodological approach in terms of its clear, practical structure and its ability to reflect the reality of an educational setting as it exists and the strengths and challenges of the intervention or process being explored. Its client-centred approach adds further merit by ensuring it is useable and applicable, which in turn strengthens its ability to affect change. In line with current EP practice (Wagner, 2000), this

consultative approach could also be applied to EPs day to day work with schools. For example, it could be used to support schools when carrying out systemic work.

Finally, it can be argued that the implications of this research stretch beyond the recommendations for the inclusion of learners' voices in the AR process and the legislative purposes for doing so. As psychological theory illustrates (Rogers, 1967; Ryan and Deci, 1985), being able to develop a sense of self and the ability to recognise and express autonomy is an essential part of development and general well-being. An implication of the findings in this research is that the considerations for enabling learners to give their voice in the AR process should be considered for all areas of education and part of practitioners' underpinning values, so that young people can develop the skills and self-knowledge they need for all areas of their life.

6.4 Strengths and limitations

6.4.1 Strengths

A strength of the current study is its focus on the population of 16 – 25 year olds which, as stated, is a new area for SEND support and is relatively under-researched in terms of SEND processes. This study provides an insight into one particular aspect of the SEND process, ARs, as well as illuminating other wider systemic issues.

Another strength of the study is the foregrounding of the learner in the findings and the focus on the learners' preferences in the set of recommendations intended to affect organisational change. In this way, the learners' voices and the study help to refine the requirements of the statutory duties and responsibilities outlined in the legislation (Children and Families Act, 2014, DfE/DoH, 2015).

This study has demonstrated the strengths and ability of the methodological approach, Illuminative Evaluation (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington, 1977). I.E. is a well-structured and accessible methodology which provides a rich and thorough understanding of the complex social, cultural and political contexts and influencing dynamics on an educational innovation. The use of I.E. for this study highlighted the conflict occurring at multiple levels (learners and staff; learners and parents; LSWs and other staff; College and LAs; College, LAs and Legislation) but arising from this conflict was a collaborative, reality-based set of solutions to the problems.

Lastly, this study is an example of how I.E. answers many of the concerns raised in Chapter 3 regarding research in Educational Psychology (Fredrickson, 2002; Fox 2011; Schiff 2017). I.E. lends itself well to this field of research due to its social-constructivist, consultative, 'client-centred' approach (Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington, 1977; Parlett, 1981; Burden, 2008).

6.4.2 Limitations

A limitation of the study is the size and sampling method of the participants. Only four learners' experiences, and their associated LSWs and LS Co-ods were represented (11 participants in total). Two of the learners attended the SEND Department at Campus 1. One learner from Campus 2 was interviewed and again, she was part of the SEND Department. Only one of the learners was part of the wider, mainstream college. Therefore, the views gathered here may not be representative of other learners with EHCPs at the college. As discussed in Chapter 3, the random selection of participants and opportunities to self-select became problematic for several reasons, not least because of the number of learners with EHCPs in the college. This meant the learners were approached by the LS Co-ods to take part which has ethical implications in terms of consent and impact of power imbalances. learners who were more likely to agree to take part were also likely to have been chosen. It is hoped that by using three different participant groups, observations and documentary analysis, the relevance of the findings across the college is strengthened by triangulating the evidence (Robson, 2002). Stage 5 of the methodological approach also allowed for a 'checking of the reality' (Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington, 1977) and this was evidenced through the discussions in the feedback meeting.

Another limitation of the study, as raised in Chapter 3 and became apparent throughout the data collection, was the impact of the word 'Evaluation' in the title of the I.E. Issues of power imbalances and participants' answers being influenced by social desirability (Robson, 2002; Braun and Clarke, 2013) are always a concern in terms of data reliability and ethical implications. When meeting with the practitioners, and in particular the LSWs, their answers sometimes gave the impression they felt the need to present a 'best picture'. With experience, I learnt to accommodate for this by reminding them of the purposes of the study on multiple occasions, and my role as a neutral researcher. In future practice, the term 'Illuminative Research' (Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington, 1977), may be a preferable choice for minimising these issues.

A final limitation of the study is that due to its 'case study' nature, the findings and recommendations could be considered as bound to this setting. Indeed, there were an infinite number of variables and factors unique to this college, not least their other organisational priorities. Still, elements of the findings are likely to be transferrable and the recommendations a useful basis for organisational development.

6.5 Quality criteria

Yardley (2000) discusses how the issues and concerns related to the value of qualitative research are partly founded in its lack of agreed approaches and methods. Additionally, due to its epistemological and ontological beliefs, there is no agreed criteria for assessing the quality of a piece of qualitative

research. In answer to these quandaries, Yardley (2000) offers a framework to aid the reflection and assessment of qualitative research which will be referred to for this dissertation.

Sensitivity to context

Sensitivity to context (Yardley, 2000) relates to how well the research methods and the researcher was sensitive to the needs of the participants and the ethical considerations; the socio-cultural context and the setting; and the related literature.

This thesis has demonstrated its sensitivity to context through the systematic literature review and references to its findings throughout the discussion chapter. The ethical application and relevant actions taken accounted for the ethical considerations of the research and its participants as much as possible. The consultative and social-constructivist foundations of I.E. (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Stake, 1976; Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington, 1977; Burden, 2008) meant that there was a thorough consideration of the needs and perspectives of the participants and context of the college throughout the data collection and analysis. Stage 1 and 2 of the methodological approach exemplified this by seeking the college's permission to explore their AR processes and negotiating the methods and areas of interest.

Commitment, rigour, transparency and coherence

This aspect of the criteria (Yardley, 2000) entails the researchers' commitment and skills to the thoroughness of the collection and analysis of data, and the researcher's transparency of their methods, analysis and interpretation. It also includes the researcher's ability to present a coherent, recognisable version of reality, including how the findings relate to the literature.

The methodological structure and the methods adopted for this study ensured a rigorous, triangulated and thorough approach to the data collection and analysis: interviews with three different types of participants; observations; and documentary analysis. Multiple steps were taken for the thematic analysis of the interviews which led to a thorough knowledge of the content of the transcripts and detailed coding of the findings.

In terms of transparency and coherence, all transcripts of the interviews and their associated coding maps are saved and accessible on the USB memory stick provided with this thesis. An overview of the LSWs and LS Co-ods findings was discussed in the main body of the thesis and a detailed presentation of the individual interviews are included in Appendices 14 and 15. For both evidence and interest, supporting quotes for themes were included with the Findings and Discussion. The strengths and limitations of Thematic Analysis are rooted in its interpretative and social-constructivist nature, and so, as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006), Appendix 17 presents a description of the key decisions made and steps taken for the thematic analysis of the interviews.

The observation notes, which include handwritten notes for the analysis and coding stages, are included with the USB memory stick. The college documentations are included with the Appendices. For all data collected, the analytical approaches used are explained in the 'Methodology' and 'Findings' chapters.

Further coherence of the data was achieved through Stage 5 of the methodological approach as it presented a reality of the college's AR process which was recognisable to the college. As discussed, the findings also paralleled much of the literature and empirical data related to this topic.

Lastly, the rationale and personal motivations for the study have been presented in the Introduction chapter, and an account of my personal reflections of the study is provided below, providing a further layer of transparency.

Impact and importance

This final part of the quality criteria relates to the practical and theoretical value the research adds to the related socio-cultural environment and any professionals, practitioners or persons which it affects (Yardley, 2000).

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the recommendations and illustrative model for 'Eliciting and Using the Voice of the Learner for the AR process' demonstrates the impact this research could have on the college's processes and practices. It also has the potential to impact the wider community, including the parents, LA and even national legislation. Finally, it could impact Educational Psychology, both by informing EPs' understanding and practices with post-16 settings and the area of research within the profession.

6.6 Future research

The data analysis stages of this research and the feedback with the college raised several areas of interest which could be explored further.

Firstly, although parents were initially included in the planning stages for this research, as explained in the Methodology chapter, they were later dropped. The reasons for this can be summarised as follows:

- Before the sample had been confirmed, the specific ages of the participants were unknown. It was possible that any of the learners could be living independently and/or not wish for their parents to be involved. By omitting the inclusion of a parent participant group, the potential complexities and inconsistencies in the sampling methods and comparisons in data could be avoided.

- The criteria for the sample of learner participants was that they needed to be 16 years of age or older. One of the underpinning rationales for this thesis was the greater rights of young people post-16 within legislation (Children and Families Act, 2014). Removing the parents from the sample helped to acknowledge this shift in autonomy and increased impetus on the voice of the *learner* in decision-making processes.
- Timescales and the size of the study meant that I had to make decisions about the numbers of participants and prioritise areas of exploration in order to keep it within these limitations.

Throughout the data collection and analysis however, the role of the parents was raised and the complex influence they have on the learners' support and ability to express themselves. Discussions with the college staff revealed the anxieties parents face and the tensions which can arise as all parties adapt and support young people with SEND to transition to adulthood and become more independent. Future research would be beneficial to explore these complexities further and identify ways to support parents and the educational providers working with them.

Secondly, the challenges of multi-agency working was raised by the LS Co-ods and the learners, and paralleled the findings of others (Kaehne and Beyer, 2014; Palikara, Castro, Gaona and Eirinaki, 2019; Boesley and Crane, 2018). The lack of attendance of multi-agencies at the meetings and onus on the college to take responsibility for the plans was not explored in this study as it was not elaborated on in the interviews. However, it was discussed in greater detail by the college staff at the feedback meeting. Future research would be beneficial to explore these issues further, particularly within post-16 settings which may be linked with a number of LAs, in order to finally address and improve multi-agency working.

6.7 Personal reflections

The penultimate section of this chapter will provide an account of what I consider to be my most salient reflections of my experiences carrying out this research. The interpretative and constructivist views of the researcher are both a strength and unavoidable aspect of qualitative research (Yardley, 2000; Braun and Clarke, 2006) and Illuminative Evaluation (Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington, 1977), and as such it is necessary to the value and clarity of the study that the researcher is reflective throughout and provides an account of this reflexivity.

I started this process with a passion for enabling young people to lead on the decision-making for their SEND, which I described in the Introduction chapter. This study has not only strengthened my passion for it, especially after reading and re-reading the learners' comments, but has also influenced my actions both as a practitioner and within my personal life. The reasoning and knowledge I have gained on this topic at every stage of the process means that my interactions with professionals, friends and family will never, nor can they ever, be the same again.

As a practitioner, it has given me even greater consideration of the preparation stages for individual casework and the impact this can have on the quality and outcome of my involvement as a trainee Educational Psychologist. When communicating with both staff and parents, I have noticed that I have placed increasing emphasis on the need to give young people choices at multiple levels of their support.

I still have a lot to learn with how I can achieve this myself, and it is difficult to consistently be aware of and apply it when managing the many other demands of professional life. For example, after meeting with E, I asked if there was anything that I could improve as the researcher. She commented that she would have preferred to meet at a time other than her lunch break, and I realised then that the time of the interview had been suggested by a member of staff and neither of us had checked if E was really ok with this.

As well as learning from the findings of this study, the process has taken me on a steep learning curve and has taught me a great deal about real world research such as the challenges and difficulties of realising the ideal and the many skills required to be a researcher. Firstly, I have been astounded at the amount and depth of decision-making involved with carrying out and presenting research. Secondly, I have learnt the importance of having a clear understanding myself of my role as a researcher, and how to separate myself from this and my role as a trainee Educational Psychologist. As a trainee, I am in the position of helping people daily and wanting to help people is part and parcel of taking on the role. It was difficult to learn how *not* to help people when asked for my opinions on certain matters, such as when the chair of one of the meetings asked me for feedback on her skills of chairing.

Within my development of the researcher role, I also learnt of the challenges of managing the differing perspectives and understandings of sampling methods and their ethical implications. The staff at the college were incredibly helpful and keen to find participants for me, however this sometimes led to offers of 'grabbing so and so' because they would be happy to talk with me, which put me in the position of trying to maintain the ethical needs of the participants while explaining my rejections to the suggestions in a sensitive and appreciative manner. I also learnt of my own areas for development when enlisting participants, as I discovered how difficult it is to provide enough information so that young people can make informed decisions and give informed consent, without overloading or confusing them.

In relation to my passion for young people's voices, my interactions with the many participants and members of staff I met throughout the study reminded me the reality of busy educational settings and the many stresses and strains practitioners are managing. My previous experiences of being a teacher taught me all too well how demanding the role of educator is, and how tiring and difficult it is to keep

all plates spinning at all times. During the time of the study, the staff in this college were not only managing the day to day demands, they were also faced with staff changes and restructures. The practitioners I interviewed demonstrated a great deal of passion and commitment to the young people they supported. I hope that I was able to demonstrate my understanding of their unique perspectives and my sympathy for the challenges they were facing.

6.8 Concluding comment

It is hoped that this study provides clarification and practical solutions to the challenges of including young people's voices in their AR processes, and demonstrates the importance of doing so. I would argue that the benefits and significance of supporting learners to develop the skills they need to identify and express their true feelings and preferences extend beyond the purposes of the EHCP and AR process. Such skills and self-awareness, just as Rogers (1967) proposed, are an essential part of a learner's overall development and well-being and will serve them well throughout their journey of life.

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List of documents on USB memory stick

1. Transcripts
2. Coding for all interviews
3. Theme development for interviews
4. Final themes for interview
5. Observation field notes and coding

Appendix 1: LSW Job description

Job Title	Learning Support Worker
Department	Learner Services & Learning Support
Reporting to:	Learning Support Co-ordinators
Post reference:	
Main Purpose of the role	
<p>To support students with a range of learning/behavioural difficulties, (barriers to learning) enabling them to work as fully as possible to achieving their goals/qualifications. The post holders will be members of the Additional Learning Support Team and may be attached to a specific student/group or individual across the college.</p>	
Key Tasks / responsibilities:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support students in achieving their goals and qualifications in an agreed range of settings • To work collaboratively with teaching staff and others to support learner progress and achievement through 1:1 or group support in an agreed range of settings • To supervise the students during the times when they are not directly supervised by lecturing staff (e.g. breaks, lunch times and assisting with transport arrangements.) • To assist the students with any personal care needs as appropriate • To adapt/modify some curriculum materials as necessary. • To promote equality and diversity. • To work closely with the Learning Support Co-ordinators, SEND Manager, Deputy SEND Manager and teaching staff to identify ongoing support needs of one or more identified learners in the college environment • Attend team meetings, curriculum meetings, tutorials and review meetings where appropriate. • Complete and submit compulsory documentation in a timely manner • To attend staff development as appropriate • To be a positive role model for all staff and students • Any other duties required by line manager from time to time 	
Role Dimensions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The post usually falls into college term time (normally 36 weeks per year) • Cross college • 1:1 • Ratio support e.g. 1:5 • Group support • Disability support 	

Key Interfaces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Support Co-ordinators • SEND Manager • Deputy SEND Manager • Heads of Departments • Teaching Staff • Student/Curriculum Administrators • Learning Mentors
Supporting College Goals and Values – all roles
<p>In addition to the particular requirements and characteristics of individual roles, all people employed by XX College are expected to actively support the achievement of the College's goals and, at all times, both internally and externally, to behave in a manner consistent with the College's mission and values.</p> <p>This means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing your role and delivering your service in a way that helps the College achieve its strategic objectives and annual development and improvement plans - taking account of available resources and national developments. • Promoting the image of the College as one that is committed to the highest standards of delivery and service. • Sharing the College's commitment to safeguarding and prioritising the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and demonstrating it in your day to day work. • Sharing and prioritising the effective implementation of the College's Equality and Diversity Policy. • Promoting and implementing best practice in Health and Safety,
Measurable Performance Standards for this role
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support the success and progression rates for learners receiving additional learning support
Level of Disclosure and Barring (DBS) disclosure required
Enhanced with barred list checks

Appendix 2: LS Co-od Job Description

Job Title	Learning Support Co-ordinator
Department	Learning Services and Support
Reporting to:	Education Support Manager
Post reference:	
Main Purpose of the role	
<p>Working with the Head of Learning Support, Education Support Manager and Senior ALS Administrator to ensure the effective transition into college for learners with special educational needs and disabilities.</p> <p>To work with the Head of Learning Support and other Learning Support Co-ordinators to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of special educational provision, including the effective coordination and allocation of Learning Support Workers.</p> <p>To line manage a cohort of Learning Support Workers.</p> <p>To support and enable students with barriers to learning to achieve their learning goals and potential.</p> <p>To ensure special educational provision is delivered to the highest standard; meeting the needs of the learners consistently and is equitably delivered in line with College Strategic Priorities.</p>	
Key Tasks / responsibilities:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To perform line management duties i.e. learning walks, returns to work, appraisals, one to ones, induction and probation reviews and to maintain learning support workers on a daily basis. • To work collaboratively with other Learning Support Co-ordinators and Education Support Manager in the effective transition in to college of new students with special educational needs and disabilities • To work collaboratively with other faculties in the attendance of Annual EHCP reviews at main stream and specialist provisions. • To organise and chair EHCP reviews. • To support students within the classroom setting by effective allocation of Learning Support Workers in line with current governmental priorities. • To timetable the supervision of high need students when they are not directly supervised by tutors (e.g. breaks, lunchtimes and assisting with transport arrangements). • To ensure the personal care needs of students are met. • To co-ordinate the support of students in a range of settings. • To assist the monitoring of staff absence and ensure all support staff follow College procedures for reporting absence. • To work with all faculties and the Education Support Manager to identify and prioritise HNS support allocation. • To work with faculties to identify and keep accurate records of low needs support requirements in line with current government priorities and to timetable low needs support effectively and within the allocation budget. 	

- To track and monitor all ALS through accurate record keeping for students receiving additional support
- To track and monitor the impact of all special educational provision.
- To work collaboratively with the Learning Support Team and the Head of Learning Support and keep them informed of all issues/changes arising.
- To attend and arrange relevant meetings.
- To assist with the delivery of staff training.
- To work collaboratively and sensitively with teaching and support staff over issues arising.
- To be available to contribute to relevant College events such as Introduction days and Open Evenings and Open Days
- To ensure clear and effective communication across the team.
- To contribute to PEEPS and Personal Safety Assessments as required

As the needs of the College change so the above job profile, duties and location of the role within the College will be adjusted accordingly.

Where an employee indicates a disability, every effort will be made to supply all necessary aids, adaptations or equipment to allow them to carry out all of the duties of the post. If, however, a certain task proves to be unachievable, job redesign will be given full consideration.

Role Dimensions

- Cross-College Learning Support Team and Funding and Audit Coordinator
- ALS Budget
- FE and HE students on classroom based, work experience and apprenticeship programmes

Key Interfaces

- Head of Learning Support, Heads of Department, Teaching and Support Staff
- Education Support Manager.
- MIS, Exams, Learner Services, HR, Head of Off Site Provision and Apprentices
- Local Authorities, other schools and colleges and other HEI, Connexions, YST, Prospects.
- Parents/ Carers and employers
- Learning Mentors

Supporting College Goals and Values – all roles

In addition to the particular requirements and characteristics of individual roles, all people employed by the College are expected to actively support the achievement of the College's goals and, at all times, both internally and externally, to behave in a manner consistent with the College's mission and values.

This means:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing your role and delivering your service in a way that helps the College achieve its strategic objectives and annual development and improvement plans - taking account of available resources and national developments. • Promoting the image of the College as one that is committed to the highest standards of delivery and service. • Sharing the College's commitment to safeguarding and prioritising the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and demonstrating it in your day to day work. • Sharing and prioritising the effective implementation of the College's Equality and Diversity Policy. • Promoting and implementing best practice in Health and Safety,
Measurable Performance Standards for this role
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success and Progression rates for learners receiving special educational provision • Student and partner satisfaction with the learning support provision • Allocating special education provision to budget • Delivery of High Needs Student Assessment/reviews and reporting /tracking documents
Level of Disclosure and Barring (DBS) disclosure required
Either: 1: Enhanced with barred list checks,

Appendix 3: Ethics Application



School for Policy Studies

SPS RESEARCH ETHICS

APPLICATION FORM: STAFF and DOCTORAL STUDENTS

- This proforma must be completed for each piece of research carried out by members of the School for Policy Studies, both staff and doctoral postgraduate students.
- See the Ethics Procedures document for clarification of the process.
- All research **must** be ethically reviewed before any fieldwork is conducted, regardless of source of funding.
- See the School's policy and guidelines relating to research ethics and data protection, to which the project is required to conform.
- Please stick to the word limit provided. **Do not attach** your funding application or research proposal.

Key project details:

1. **Proposer's Name**

Pauline Cooper

2. **Proposer's Email Address:**

[REDACTED]; pc16309@bristol.ac.uk

3. **Project Title**

An Illuminative Evaluation exploring a Post 16 setting's processes for eliciting pupil voice and using person centred planning and how this impacts outcomes and support.

4. **Project Start Date:**

September 2017

End Date:

August 2019

Who needs to provide Research Ethics Committee approval for your project?

The SPS REC will only consider those research ethics applications which do not require submission elsewhere. As such, you should make sure that your proposed research does not fall within the jurisdiction of the NRES system:

<http://www.nres.nhs.uk/applications/approval-requirements/ethical-review-requirements/>

If you are not sure where you should apply please discuss it with either the chair of the Committee or the Faculty Ethics Officer who is based in RED.

Currently NRES are not expected to consider applications in respect of activities that are not research: i.e. clinical audit, service evaluation and public health surveillance. In addition REC review is not normally required for research involving NHS or social care staff recruited as research participants by virtue of their professional role. Social care research projects which are funded by the Department of Health, must always be reviewed by a REC within the Research Ethics Service for England. Similarly research which accesses unanonymised patient records must be reviewed by a REC and NIGB.

Who needs to provide governance approval for this project?

If this project involves access to patients, clients, staff or carers of an NHS Trust or Social Care Organisation, it falls within the scope of the Research Governance Framework for Health and Social. You will also need to get written approval from the Research Management Office or equivalent of each NHS Trust or Social Care Organisation.

When you have ethical approval, you will need to complete the research registration form:

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/red/research-governance/registration-sponsorship/study-notification.html>

Guidance on completing this form can be found at: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/red/research-governance/registration-sponsorship/guidance.pdf>. Contact the Research Governance team

(<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/red/people/group/red/1602>) for guidance on completing this form and if you have any questions about obtaining local approval.

Do you need additional insurance to carry out your research?

Whilst staff and doctoral students will normally be covered by the University's indemnity insurance there are some situations where it will need to be checked with the insurer. If you are conducting research with: Pregnant research subjects or children under 5 you should email: insurance-enquiries@bristol.ac.uk

In addition, if you are working or travelling overseas you should take advantage of the university travel insurance.

Do you need a Disclosure and Barring Service check?

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) replaces the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). Criteria for deciding whether you require a DBS check are available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service/about>

You should specifically look at the frequency, nature, and duration of your contact with potentially vulnerable adults and or children. If your contact is a one-off research interaction, or infrequent contact (for example: 3 contacts over a period of time) you are unlikely to require a check.

If you think you need a DBS check then you should consult the University of Bristol web-page:

<http://www.bris.ac.uk/secretary/legal/disclosure/crbhome>

5. If your research project requires REC approval elsewhere please tell us which committee, this includes where co-researchers are applying for approval at another institution. Please provide us with a copy of your approval letter for our records when it is available.

6. Have all subcontractors you are using for this project (including transcribers, interpreters, and co-researchers not formally employed at Bristol University) agreed to be bound by the School's requirements for ethical research practice?

Yes

No/Not yet

Not applicable

x

Note: You must ensure that written agreement is secured before they start to work. They will be provided with training and sign a detailed consent form.

7. If you are a PhD/doctoral student please tell us the name of your research supervisor.

John Franey

Has your supervisor seen this final versions of your ethics application?

Yes

x

No

8. Who is funding this study?

University of Bristol

If this study is funded by the ESRC or another funder requiring lay representation on the ethics committee and is being undertaken by a member staff, this form should be submitted to the Faculty REC.

Post-graduate students undertaking ESRC funded projects should submit their form to the SPS Committee.

9. Is this application part of a larger proposal?

No

x

Yes

If yes, please provide a summary of the larger study and indicate how this application relates to the overall study.

10. Is this proposal a replication of a similar proposal already approved by the SPS REC? Please provide the SPS REC reference number.

No

x

Yes

If Yes, please tell us the name of the project, the date approval was given and code (if you have one).

Please describe any differences (such as context) in the current study. If the study is a replication of a previously approved study. Submit these first two pages of the form.

ETHICAL RESEARCH PROFORMA

The following set of questions is intended to provide the School Research Ethics Committee with enough information to determine the risks and benefits associated with your research. You should use these questions to assist in identifying the ethical considerations which are important to your research. You should identify any relevant ethical issues and how you intend to deal with them. Whilst the REC does not comment on the methodological design of your study, it will consider whether the design of your study is likely to produce the benefits you anticipate. **Please avoid copying and pasting large parts of research bids or proposals which do not directly answer the questions.** Please also avoid using *unexplained* acronyms, abbreviations or jargon.

- 1. IDENTITY & EXPERIENCE OF (CO) RESEARCHERS:** Please give a list of names, positions, qualifications, previous research experience, and functions in the proposed research of all those who will be in contact with participants

Pauline Cooper: Trainee Educational Psychologist (University of Bristol). BSc Psychology. Previous research experience: Year 1 Research Commission for Educational Psychology doctorate and through dissertation for undergraduate qualification. Function in research: carrying out data collection through observations and interviews, planning and preparation, data analysis and interpretation of findings, overall organisation and running of the project.

- 2. STUDY AIMS/OBJECTIVES [maximum of 200 words]:** Please provide the aims and objectives of your research.

The aim of the study is to use Illuminative Evaluation to find out how a Post 16 setting (a Sixth Form College) accesses and uses pupil voice and person-centred planning to inform their provision for pupils with special educational needs. I hope to do this by using observations of review meetings and interviews of key stakeholders to gain a better understanding of how the processes work. From this, I hope to help the college with their future decision making and policy development regarding person centred planning by providing them with information on what is already happening in their setting, what the strengths are of the processes currently in place, and whether there are any discrepancies occurring between the different viewpoints. The information and knowledge gained through this study will

also hopefully benefit the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) I am working within, as it will increase the understanding of the processes within a Post 16 setting, which in turn can inform decision making and professional practice in this area. This is particularly pertinent as it is currently an area of focus and development for xx EPS.

Specific areas to be considered will be:

- How the voice of the young person is gained.
- How the voice of the parents is gained.
- The level of involvement the young person has in the review of their support (including preparation for the review, the review meeting and decision-making regarding outcomes).
- The college's use of and understanding of person-centred planning.
- The awareness of the use of person-centred planning from the viewpoint of various stakeholders.
- How person-centred approaches impact the outcomes of the review meetings.
- How person-centred approaches impact ongoing support for the young person in college.

RESEARCH WITH HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

(If you are undertaking secondary data analysis, please proceed to section 11)

- 3. RESEARCH METHODS AND SAMPLING STRATEGY [maximum of 300 words]:** Please tell us what you propose to do in your research and how individual participants, or groups of participants, will be identified and sampled. Please also tell us what is expected of research participants who consent to take part (Please note that recruitment procedures are covered in question 8)

Using the structure of Illuminative Evaluation as described in Parlett and Hamilton's (1972) article, the first stage of the project is 'Setting up the evaluation'. During this stage, I will meet with college to agree what information we both hope to gain from the study and how this will help inform the practices of the college. I will also explain and agree with them how the study will be carried out. The outcome of the study will be discussed as part of this negotiation: a report which will be an honest, sensitive and useful reflection of what is happening, and be recognisable by those involved and others in the college community. Through preliminary discussions, the SENCO of xxx College has confirmed that, if agreed by the Ethics Panel, he is happy for the study to take place.

The second stage of the study is Open-Ended Exploration (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972) and for this I will adopt an ethnographical approach by carrying out observations of review meetings. I will be making notes on who attends the meetings, what is discussed in the meetings, what information is used to determine the outcomes and what, if any, person-centred approaches are included in the meetings. I will then analyse my observations. Consent will need to be obtained from all participants in the meetings.

The third stage of the study is the Focused Enquiries stage. Using my findings from Stage 2 to focus my questioning, I will use semi-structured interviews. The college is split between 4 sites. For each site, I will interview a young person with an Education Health Care Plan, their parents/carers, their learning support worker (LSW) and the learning support co-ordinator for that site. This will give a total of 16 interviews and will allow me to explore the different experiences and perspectives of each group of 4 key stakeholders throughout an annual review process. Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) will be used to analyse the interviews.

The study will include 4 groups of 4 key stakeholders in an Annual Review Process (the young person, their parent, their learning support worker and the learning support co-ordinator). The college has 4 sites and therefore there will be one group per site, giving a total of 16 participants.

The young person and their associated adults will be identified in advance of the annual review observations and subsequent interviews. They will be identified and selected by the college. The criteria for their selection will be based on when their annual review meeting for their Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) is planned as this will need to occur during the time frame of data collection. Information and consent forms will be sent to the young people, their parents, their learning support worker and the learning support co-ordinator ahead of the Annual Review meeting. Additional consent forms will be prepared for any additional professionals or family members who are invited to join the annual review for any reason (e.g. Speech and Language Therapists, Educational Psychologists, advocates for the parents or young person).

Parlett, M. and Hamilton, D. (1972), *'Evaluation as illumination: a new approach to the study of innovatory programs. Occasional Paper'*, London: Nuffield Foundation.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006), 'Using thematic analysis in psychology', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 77-101.

- 4. EXPECTED DURATION OF RESEARCH ACTIVITY:** Please tell us how long each researcher will be working on fieldwork/research activity. For example, conducting interviews between Feb 12 – July 2016. Also tell us how long participant involvement will be. For example: Interviewing 25 professional participants X2 for a maximum of 1 hour per interview.

Observations and Interviews will be carried out between April 2018 and December 2018.

Observations of the annual reviews will be the duration of the meetings and are anticipated to be between 45 minutes to 1.5 hours.

Interviews will take up to 60 minutes.

- 5. POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND TO WHOM: [maximum 100 words]** Tell us briefly what the main benefits of the research are and to whom.

The College: The college will be able to use the information to inform decision making and future policies and practices regarding pupil voice and person-centred planning.

The SENCO: The SENCO will gain a greater understanding of the systems in place and be involved in a piece of doctoral research which can be used for professional development.

Future students at the college: By understanding and developing the person-centred approaches in the college, future students, both with and without SEN, are likely to benefit from any changes.

College staff participants: Being involved in the study will increase their understanding and awareness of the use of person-centred planning and pupil voice which is likely to lead to a level of professional reflection and development. They will also benefit from feeling their opinions have been heard and listened to and are part of the college's development.

The Young people and their parents: They will have an opportunity to have their thoughts, feelings and perspectives heard on the process that concerns them most. They may benefit from feeling that their views and thoughts will lead to any necessary changes and improvements. They may also benefit from knowing they are supporting the college if they are able to report on any positive experiences.

The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) : The service is currently developing their understanding of Post 16 settings and how to assess and provide support for this area. By illuminating the systems in this particular setting, the information can be used to inform the service's knowledge and practice.

Other Educational Psychologists and Services: Post 16 is an area which is relatively new to Educational Psychology since the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice

legislation changes in 2014 and is an area which EPs reportedly feel less experienced and knowledgeable. Although this study is specific to one college, it should help to demystify this area.

6. **POTENTIAL RISKS/HARM TO PARTICIPANTS [maximum of 100 words]:** What potential risks are there to the participants and how will you address them? List any potential physical or psychological dangers that can be anticipated? You may find it useful to conduct a more formal risk assessment prior to conducting your fieldwork. The University has an example of risk assessment form: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/safety/policies/>

RISK	HOW IT WILL BE ADDRESSED
Staff in the college may feel their work has been scrutinized and judged negatively	<p>I will ensure that all the participants are aware and clear about the aim of the project: to illuminate what is happening, not judge. I will make it clear in the information sheets, at the start of the observations and interviews and in the report that my role is to include all the different viewpoints and reflect an honest and fair picture based on what has been said.</p> <p>I will use personal reflection, triangulation of information and scrutiny of my data analysis to ensure the themes I find are based on what has actually been said and are genuinely significant, and not based on my own biases and perspectives on the situation. I will also discuss the findings of my data analysis with the SENCo as a method to check that they are recognisable.</p> <p>Participants will be reminded in the consent forms, at the start of the interviews and throughout the study that they can withdraw at any time up to the date specified in the consent forms.</p>
Participants may feel uncomfortable about their opinions being included in the report if they are reporting negative experiences: they may be concerned it will affect them professionally (if staff), damage a relationship, or hurt another's feelings/professional role. Participants may be especially concerned as the selection method means they are more identifiable.	<p>Participants will be reminded throughout the process that all data will be anonymous: no names will be recorded during the observations, no names will be required in the interviews and no names will be included in the report.</p> <p>Participants will also be reminded that the report is not to judge but illuminate practices in the college and therefore will not be reported in a negative or 'finger pointing' way.</p> <p>Participants will be reminded throughout that they can withdraw from the process at any point up to the specified date on the consent form.</p> <p>Participants will be informed in the information sheets and at the start of the interviews of the benefits of the study (e.g. having an opportunity to have their opinions heard; helping to improve the practices of the college and potentially those of the EPS and other colleges').</p>
Being involved in the study may bring more awareness to the young people and their family of the importance of person centred planning and pupil	After the interviews, I will check that the participants are ok and offer them the opportunity to debrief. If necessary, they will be signposted to appropriate teams in the college or the

voice and they may feel they haven't been involved enough, either at the college or in previous settings. This could lead to negative feelings about their experiences and towards the staff members involved.	Local authority to discuss their concerns and access any necessary support. They will have my contact details at the Educational Psychology Service in case they would like to ask any questions following the interviews.
The process may highlight and raise systemic issues regarding the practices of the college and/or the Local authority. This may in turn reflect badly on particular members of the college or EPS.	All data and findings will be handled sensitively. Any issues that arise will be reflected on and discussed with my thesis supervisor and then my placement supervisor before reporting back to the appropriate people in either the college and/or EPS (e.g. the SENCo, Senior Leadership Team, Senior Educational Psychologist, Principle Educational Psychologist). The negotiation phases at the start of the process will have highlighted the key areas that the college and I wish to focus on. This, as well as continuous dialogue with the SENCo, should minimise the chances of 'surprises' being found as the college is likely to already be aware of any gaps in their processes and practices, and the study will therefore be aiming to seek the details of these gaps. The study is also aiming to have a strong focus on the strengths of the college which will provide a balanced report.
Time demands on the participants	Participants will be made aware of the time implications in the information sheets. I will be flexible to the needs of the participants and travel to their preferred locations for the interviews.

- 7. RESEARCHER SAFETY [maximum of 200 words]:** What risks could the researchers be exposed to during this research project? If you are conducting research in individual's homes or potentially dangerous places then a researcher safety protocol is mandatory. Examples of safety protocols are available in the guidance.

RISK	HOW IT WILL BE ADDRESSED
Interview at participant's home	Participants will be given the option of the interview being carried out at home or at the college. If the participants prefer to be interviewed at home, fieldwork safety protocol will be followed. A colleague (my placement supervisor or another colleague or friend) will know of the start and finish time of the interview. I will arrange to contact them once the interview is finished. If they don't hear from me, they will contact me. If they are unable to contact me, they will access the address details from the SENCo at the college and the police will be informed. Details of the interview times will also be shared with the university.
Travel	I will have full insurance and will consider road conditions and safety precautions in driving.

Difficult conversations with participants (emotional risk)	Personal reflection will occur after every interview and debriefing of the interviews will be planned in with my thesis supervisor.
Complaints from the college or EPS following the report of the findings.	Continuous reporting back, discussion and checking of the findings will happen throughout the data analysis and write up of the report. support will be accessed from my thesis supervisor and placement supervisor if necessary following the circulation of the report.

- 8. RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES [maximum of 400 words]:** How are you going to access participants? Are there any gatekeepers involved? Is there any sense in which respondents might be “obliged” to participate (for example because their manager will know, or because they are a service user and their service will know), if so how will this be dealt with.

The SENCo for the college is the gatekeeper to the participants. The SENCo will be asked to create a list of pupils from each college site who have an Education Health Care Plan and whose annual review dates are within the data collection time frame. He will then randomly select a name from each of the lists for the four college sites. The students picked will then be approached and informed of the study. Once consent is gained, the associated participants (e.g. the student's parents, learning support worker and the learning support co-ordinator for their college site) will then be approached and informed of the study.

Once consent has been given for me to contact the participants, I will call them to explain the study. If they agree at this stage to take part, I will ask for their address so that I can send them the information sheet and full consent form in the post. A stamped envelope addressed to me at the EPS will be included. If consent forms haven't been received after 3 weeks, I will phone participants to check they are still happy to be involved. Once consent has been gained from a complete 'set' of participants for a particular college site, observations and interview dates and times will be arranged.

Participants may feel obliged to take part in the study for various reasons: the young people may feel obliged due to the hierarchy of a college staff member asking them to take part; parents may feel obliged if their child is keen to take part; the learning support workers and co-ordinators may feel obliged due to implicit or explicit professional expectations placed on them. This will be counteracted by fully informing potential participants of the aims of the study, its potential benefits and their rights to withdraw at any time (up to the specified date). I will also be flexible to the needs of the participants.

- 9. INFORMED CONSENT [maximum of 200 words]:** How will this be obtained? Whilst in many cases written consent is preferable, where this is not possible or appropriate this should be clearly justified. An age and ability appropriate participant information sheet (PIS) setting out factors relevant to the interests of participants in the study must be handed to them in advance of seeking consent (see materials table for list of what should be included). If you are proposing to adopt an approach in which informed consent is not sought you must explain in detail why this is not considered to be appropriate. If you are planning to use photographic or video images in your method then additional specific consent should be sought from participants.

A Participant Information Sheet will be provided to participants when initially informed and asked to be involved by the SENCo. When I phone the participants, I will talk through with them the aims of the study and what will be required of them and their rights to consent and withdrawal

of consent. Following this, the Participant Information Sheet plus a Confidentiality Protocol and Consent sheet will be sent directly to the participants in the post.

At the start of the observations and interviews, the aim of the study and the participants' rights with regard to consent and participation will be explained (e.g. that the information is anonymous, that they can withdraw at any time up to the specified date). At the end of observations and interviews, I will check with them that they are still happy to be included in the study.

Information sheets, Protocol sheet and consent sheets are currently adapted to a certain level of accessibility. The expectation of the young people (and their parents) is that they will have a literacy age that will allow them to access the information sheets. If appropriate, adapted information will be provided for the students or parents to take account of their needs, for example by using the characteristics of Easy Read format (e.g. large print, simple language, pictures). Additionally, the information will be read to them if necessary.

Please tick the box to confirm that you will keep evidence of the consent forms (either actual forms or digitally scanned forms), securely for twenty years.

x

10. If you intend to use an on-line survey (for example Survey Monkey) you need to ensure that the data will not leave the European Economic Area i.e. be transferred or held on computers in the USA

Please tick the box to confirm that you will not use any on-line survey service based in the USA or outside the European Economic Area (EEA).

x

11. **DATA PROTECTION:** All applicants should regularly take the data protection on-line tutorial provided by the University in order to ensure they are aware of the requirements of current data protection legislation.
- University policy is that "personal data can be sent abroad if the data subject gives unambiguous written consent. Staff should seek permission from the University Secretary prior to sending personal data outside of the EEA".

Any breach of the University data protection responsibilities could lead to disciplinary action.

Have you taken the mandatory University data protection on-line tutorial in the last 12 months?
https://www.bris.ac.uk/is/media/training/uobonly/datasecurity/page_01.htm

Yes

x

No

Do you plan to send any information/data, which could be used to identify a living person, to anybody who works in a country that is not part of the European Union?

See http://www.ico.gov.uk/for_organisations/data_protection/the_guide/principle_8.aspx

No

x

Yes

If **YES** please list the country or countries:

--

Please outline your procedure for data protection. It is University of Bristol policy that interviews must be recorded on an encrypted device. Ideally this should be a University owned encrypted digital recorder (see <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/infosec/uobdata/transcription/>)

It is University of Bristol policy that data is stored in an anonymised format for future use by other researchers (see <http://data.bris.ac.uk/>). What level of future access to the anonymised data will there be:

- Open access
- Restricted access - what restrictions?
- Closed access - on what grounds?

1. Personal data shall be processed fairly and lawfully and, in particular, shall not be processed unless:

(a) at least one of the conditions in Schedule 2 is met, and

(b) in the case of sensitive personal data, at least one of the conditions in Schedule 3 is also met.

Interviews will be recorded on a University owned encrypted digital recorder, and securely stored until transcribed.

2. Personal data shall be obtained only for one or more specified and lawful purposes, and shall not be further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose or those purposes.

• Data will be stored in anonymised format and only be used by future researchers on a restricted access. The restrictions will be that benefits of their obtaining and using the data must be justified.

3. Personal data shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose or purposes for which they are processed.

• Participants will be required to talk about their experiences on one occasion, lasting up to 1 hour.

4. Personal data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date.

• Once data is collected it will be shared and checked with each participant for accuracy.

5. Personal data processed for any purpose or purposes shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose or those purposes.

• As per the University of Bristol requirements, data will be stored securely on a password protected server and be destroyed after 20 years. Information regarding this will be included on each information sheet (see attached).

6. Personal data shall be processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects under this Act.

• It will be ensured that data is accurately recorded. Transcripts will be re-read and checked by the researcher.

7. Personal data shall not be transferred to a country or territory outside the European Economic Area

Any further use of the data must be justified, and the rights and freedoms of the data subjects in relation to processing the data must be ensured.

12. CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY	Yes	No
All my data will be stored on a password protected server	x	
I will only transfer unanonymised data if it is encrypted. (For advice on encryption see: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/infosec/uobdata/encrypt/device/)	x	
If there is a potential for participants to disclose illegal activity or harm to others you will need to provide a confidentiality protocol.	N/A	
Please tick the box to CONFIRM that you warned participants on the information and consent forms that there are limits to confidentiality and that at the end of the project data will be stored for 20 years on appropriate storage facility. https://www.acrc.bris.ac.uk/acrc/storage.htm	x	

Please outline your procedure for ensuring confidentiality and anonymity.

Data will be stored securely. Data will not feature any names, and participants will be asked not to use any names of clients or other practitioners at the start of the interviews. Pseudo-names or initials will be used when making recording in the observations. Participants will be made aware of limits to confidentiality in relation to disclosures of harm or illegal activity.

Please proceed to question 15.

SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS

13. Secondary Data Analysis

Please briefly explain;

- (1) What secondary datasets you will use?
- (2) Where did you get these data from (e.g. ESRC Data Archive)?
- (3) How did you obtain permission to use these data? (e.g. by signing an end user licence)
- (4) Do you plan to make derived variables and/or analytical syntax available to other researchers? (e.g. by archiving them on data.bris or at the UK Data Archive)
- (5) Where will you store the secondary datasets?

DATA MANAGEMENT

14. Data Management

It is RCUK and UoB policy that all research data (including qualitative data e.g. interview transcripts, videos, etc.) should be made freely and openly available for other researchers to use via the data.bris Research Data Repository and/or the UK Data Archive. This raises a number of ethical issues, for example you **MUST** ensure that consent is requested to allow data to be shared and reused.

Please briefly explain;

- 1) How you will obtain specific consent for data preservation and sharing with other researchers?
- 2) How will you protect the identity of participants? e.g. how will you anonymise your data for reuse.
- 3) How will the data be licensed for reuse? e.g. Do you plan to place any restrictions on the reuse of your data such as Creative Common Share Alike 2.0 licence (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/uk/>)
- 4) Where will you archive your data and metadata for re-use by other researchers?

Interviews will be recorded on a University owned encrypted digital recorder, and securely stored until transcribed. Transcriptions will be available on a restricted access, with future researchers being required to justify the potential benefits of using them.

I will store data concerning participants on a password protected server. I will only transfer unanonymised data if it is encrypted. I will use pseudonyms within the transcripts, and unanonymised details of participants will be stored elsewhere. The name of any participating school will be removed.

Please proceed to question 15.

PLEASE COMPLETE FOR ALL PROJECTS

- 15. DISSEMINATION OF FINDINGS [maximum 200 words]:** Are you planning to send copies of data to participants for them to check/comment on? If so, in what format and under what conditions? What is the anticipated use of the data, forms of publication and dissemination of findings etc.?

The data will be analysed using thematic analysis. A meeting will be arranged with the SENCo to discuss the findings and a final summary of the key findings for the report will be agreed. The full report will then be written and shared with the SENCo, the participants and the Leadership Team of the College.

The full data analysis will be included in my thesis. This will be submitted to the university and once finalised and agreed, will be submitted to the University of Bristol Library.

- 16. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** Please identify which of the following documents, and how many, you will be submitting within your application: Guidance is given at the end of this document (appendix 1) on what each of these additional materials might contain.

Additional Material:	NUMBER OF DOCUMENTS
Participants information sheet (s)	5
Consent form (s)	2
Confidentiality protocol	2
Recruitment letters/posters/leaflets	
Photo method information sheet	
Photo method consent form	
Support information for participant	
3rd party confidentiality agreement	

Please DO NOT send your research proposal or research bid as the Committee will not look at this

SUBMITTING AND REVIEWING YOUR PROPOSAL:

- To submit your application you should create a single PDF document which contains your application form and all additional material and submit this information to the SPS Research Ethics Administrator by email to sps-ethics@bristol.ac.uk

- If you are having problems with this then please contact the SPS Research Ethics Administrator by email (sps-ethics@bristol.ac.uk) to discuss.
- Your form will then be circulated to the SPS Research Ethics Committee who will review your proposal on the basis of the information provided in this single PDF document. The likely response time is outlined in the 'Ethics Procedures' document. For staff applications we try to turn these around in 2-3 weeks. Doctoral student applications should be submitted by the relevant meeting deadline and will be turned around in 4 weeks.
- Should the Committee have any questions or queries after reviewing your application, the chair will contact you directly. If the Committee makes any recommendations you should confirm, in writing, that you will adhere to these recommendations before receiving approval for your project.
- Should your research change following approval it is your responsibility to inform the Committee in writing and seek clarification about whether the changes in circumstance require further ethical consideration.

Failure to obtain Ethical Approval for research is considered research misconduct by the University and is dealt with under their current misconduct rules.

Chair: Beth Tarleton (beth.tarleton@bris.ac.uk)
Administrator: Zaheda Tariq (sps-ethics@bristol.ac.uk)
Date form updated by SPS REC: February 2016.

Appendix 1: Suggestions of what might normally be included within additional materials and some brief guidance

Material	Information to include/brief guidance
Participant Information Sheet (PIS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the purpose of the study? • Why have I been chosen? • What will happen if I take part? • What will happen if I don't take part? • Anonymisation • Limits of confidentiality • What will my information be used for • Further contact details for general enquiries and for any complaints about the research practice – this should not be the chair of the REC • Whether anonymised data will be available for future use <p>Information sheets should be appropriate to the age and ability of the potential participant.</p> <p>Please ensure that your participant information sheet and consent forms are complimentary – ie the key information on the PIS is also covered on the consent form.</p>
Consent form(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants has read/understood the participant information sheet (PIS) and are happy to take part • Understand the research is confidential and any limits to confidentiality are made clear • Can withdraw from the research (although there may be limits on this as if participants withdraw 2 days before submission of report/thesis this would be problematic) • Are happy for interviews to be digitally recorded or notes taken • That the data will be anonymised (identifying features removed) • How the data will be used • How data is stored • Whether anonymised data will be available for future use <p>Consent forms should be appropriate to the age and ability of the potential participant.</p>
Adverts for recruitment	<p>It may be necessary to provide information on how you intend to advertise for participants. This should provide enough information for you to target the relevant participants.</p>

Confidentiality Protocol	<p>This will be more important for those research topics which might result in participants talking about issues where confidentiality might need to be broken. Whilst you have a responsibility to uphold the confidentiality of your interviews there may be occasions when you also have a duty to warn about harm to the participant or to others. This should be considered prior to the research and a procedure put in place. In most cases this procedure would involve the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that participants are aware that there are limits to confidentiality; • That you will discuss any issues which arise with your research supervisor/colleagues as soon as possible after an incident; • That your supervisor or the project PI is in a position to make a decision about whether confidentiality needs to be broken;
3rd party confidentiality agreement	Confidentiality statement which might be used when using a transcriber or interpreter to ensure that they will adhere to principles of confidentiality. This may be needed if using other co-researchers such as focus group co-facilitator.
Photo Methods PIS and consent forms	If you are using photo methods then there are additional considerations about consent to use visual images. You should take the University data protection tutorial to ensure that you get appropriate consent and store the data appropriately. We highly recommend that you look at previous examples of PIS and consent forms prior to designing your own.
Support for participants after the research	If may be necessary to give participants information about support available to them at the end of an interview or focus group. This should be relevant to the topic you are researching. You should check that services are still running and that you have the right contact details on them.

Appendix 4: Information sheets



8 Priory Road, Bristol, BS8 1TZ

T: +44 (0) 117 954 6755

F: +44 (0) 117 954 6756

W: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/Depts/SPS>

A study of how a college uses 'Person-Centred Planning' and accesses and uses the 'voice' of learners with Educational Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) to inform and plan their support.

Participant Information Sheet (learner)

- **What is the purpose of this study?**

This study will be looking at how your college listens to the voices of learners with EHCPs and how they use their opinions.

To do this, with your agreement, I will sit in on and write notes on your Annual Review. This is a meeting which looks at how the college helps you with your work.



If you agree to continue with the study, I will then interview you to find out how you felt about this meeting, how the college helps you and how they ask for your opinions on the help they give you. I will also be interviewing your learning support worker and the learning support co-ordinator for the college you go to. This is because everyone has different ideas and I want to make sure I understand all of them.



Hopefully, by finding out how the college listens to and uses your ideas, I can help the college work out how they can do this even better. This will help other learners in the future and will also help people like me (Educational Psychologists) help other colleges.

- **Why have I been chosen?**

You have been chosen for this study because you are a learner with an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP).

- **What will happen if I take part?**

If you take part in the study, I will attend your Annual Review meeting to see how your support is reviewed and planned.

You will then be interviewed by me. This will take a maximum of one hour. I can interview you either at home or college, it's up to you.

We will talk through what's going to happen when we meet and you can ask me any questions. You can also stop the interview at any time if you want to. You will also be able to ask any other questions at the end of the interview. The interview will be recorded and kept in a safe place at Bristol University.

- **What will happen if I don't take part?**

You can say that you no longer want to be in the study at any time and nobody will mind. However, this may be difficult for the project later on. Therefore, if you don't want to take part anymore, it would be better if you let me know before 1st March 2019.

- **Anonymisation**

No names will be written down in any observations or the interviews. Pseudonyms (fake names) will be used in the interview write ups and reports.

- **Limits of confidentiality**

Confidentiality will be maintained by the use of anonymisation (no names) and pseudonyms (fake names). A report of the study will be given to the SENCo and some of the Senior Leadership Team of the college. The report will maintain confidentiality.

If you tell me something which suggests there has been illegal activity or I think you or someone else has been harmed, or is at risk of being harmed, I will have to tell the Safeguarding Officer at the college.

- **What will my information be used for?**

The information you give me will be used to find out about a young person's experiences of being listened to in a college and how this has helped the college support them. It will help the college do this even better for future learners like you. It will also help me, and other Educational Psychologists, to help other colleges and learners who are 16 years of age and older.

If you want to know more or have any questions, please contact me, Pauline Cooper, Trainee Educational Psychologist with the University of Bristol and XX Educational Psychology Service (pc16309@bristol.ac.uk). If you are not happy at any point and would like to speak to someone else or complain, please contact John Franey (John.Franey@bristol.ac.uk).

Anonymised data will be available on the University of Bristol's secure data storage for future research projects. This study has been approved by the SPS Research Ethics Committee.

A study of how a college uses 'Person-Centred Planning' and accesses and uses the 'voice' of learners with Educational Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) to inform and plan their support.

Participant Information Sheet (learning support worker)

- **What is the purpose of this study?**

The purpose of this study is to explore how a Post-16 setting accesses and uses 'Learner Voice' and 'Person Centred Planning' to support their learners with EHCPs and inform the Annual review meetings and outcomes. By using an approach called 'Illuminative Evaluation', I will use a range of methods (observations and interviews) to gain a full understanding of the processes and practices used in the college and gather the different perspectives and experiences of those who have been involved. The perspectives I will be gathering are those of the young person, their learning support worker and the learning support co-ordinators of the college site they attend. By 'illuminating' the processes, the information gained can be used:

- to inform the college's decision-making and policies;
- to develop further their ability to use the learner's 'voice' to inform and plan for their support;
- as a rich source of information for Educational Psychologists (EPs) (particularly those of the XX Educational Psychology Service/EPS) to help develop their understanding and practices within the Post-16 area of Special Educational Needs.

- **Why have I been chosen?**

You have been chosen for this study because you are the learning support worker of a young person with an EHCP who is taking part in the study. To fully understand the processes the college uses to access 'learner voice' and their use of 'Person Centred Planning' for the Annual Review process, it is important to gather the experiences of the key people involved.

- **What will happen if I take part?**

If you consent to taking part in the study, you may or may not be involved in an observation of the learner's Annual Review for their EHCP. This will be dependent on the college's usual practices and whether it is the norm or college expectation for you to attend this meeting. The Annual Review meeting will be carried out as is usually planned by the learning support team of the college. Therefore, if you do attend, you will not need to do anything additional to what you would normally do for this meeting. The observation notes will be carried out by me and all observation notes will be anonymous.

The second part of the study will involve a semi-structured interview carried out by me. The interview will be arranged at a time and place that is convenient for you. The interview will take up to an hour (max.) and this will include time at the start of the session to talk through the

purposes of the study, expectations for the session, confidentiality and consent procedures; give time for any questions regarding the research and interview; and a debriefing session at the end. The interview will focus on your experiences and understanding of how the college has accessed the young person's thoughts and opinions regarding the support they receive and how they have been included in the planning of the actions and outcomes for their support. The interview will be recorded and saved on a secure data storage at the University of Bristol.

The findings of all the data will be fed back to the college to be discussed. A final report will be written which will be circulated to the College, the participants of the study and XX EPS. The data will also be included in my thesis, a copy of which will be stored at the University of Bristol Library once it is complete.

- **What will happen if I don't take part?**

You can choose to withdraw from the study at any time. However, please note this could be problematic for the data analysis and research findings. Therefore, it would be preferable for participants not to withdraw after 1st March 2019.

- **Anonymisation**

No names will be written down in any observations or the interviews. Pseudonyms will be used in the interview transcripts, any reports given to the college or EPS and for the thesis.

- **Limits of confidentiality**

Confidentiality will be maintained by the use of anonymisation and pseudonyms.

An executive summary of the study will be provided to the SENDCo and members of the Senior Leadership Team which will maintain the confidentiality of the participants.

If circumstances arise which indicate illegal activity, they will be addressed through the college's procedures.

- **What will my information be used for?**

The information you provide will be used to identify common themes and experiences of learning support workers across the four sites of the college working with young people who have EHCPs and who have gone through the Annual Review process at a Post-16 educational setting. This information will inform the future planning, decision-making, policy and practice for the College, to ensure that the support provided for learners with Special Educational Needs is based on the 'voice' of the learner. It will also be used to inform the practices of EPs when providing support to Post 16 settings and young people with Special Educational Needs.

For further information, please contact Pauline Cooper, Trainee Educational Psychologist/Researcher with the University of Bristol and XX Educational Psychology Service (pc16309@bristol.ac.uk). If you are not happy at any point and would like to speak to someone else or complain, please contact John Franey at 8 Priory Road, School for Policy Studies, Bristol, BS1 1TX; John.Franey@bristol.ac.uk.

Anonymised data will be available on the University of Bristol's secure data storage for future research projects. This study has been approved by the SPS Research Ethics Committee.

A study of how a college uses 'Person-Centred Planning' and accesses and uses the 'voice' of learners with Educational Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) to inform and plan their support.

Participant Information Sheet (learning support co-ordinator)

- **What is the purpose of this study?**

The purpose of this study is to explore how a Post-16 setting accesses and uses 'Learner Voice' and 'Person Centred Planning' to support their learners with EHCPs and inform the Annual review meetings and outcomes. By using an approach called 'Illuminative Evaluation', I will use a range of methods (observations and interviews) to gain a full understanding of the processes and practices used in the college and gather the different perspectives and experiences of those who have been involved. The perspectives I will be gathering are those of the young person, their learning support worker and the learning support co-ordinators of the college site they attend. By 'illuminating' the processes, the information gained can be used:

- to inform the college's decision-making and policies;
- to develop further their ability to use the learner's 'voice' to inform and plan for their support;
- as a rich source of information for Educational Psychologists (EPs) (particularly those of the XX Educational Psychology Service/EPS) to help develop their understanding and practices within the Post-16 area of Special Educational Needs.

- **Why have I been chosen?**

You have been chosen for this study because you are the learning support co-ordinator for the college site that a young person attends who has an EHCP and is taking part in the study. To fully understand the processes the college uses to access 'learner voice' and their use of 'Person Centred Planning' for the Annual Review process, it is important to gather the experiences of the key people involved.

- **What will happen if I take part?**

If you consent to taking part in the study, you may or may not be involved in an observation of the learner's Annual Review for their EHCP. This will be dependent on the college's usual practices and whether it is the norm or college expectation for you to attend this meeting. The Annual Review meeting will be carried out as is usually planned by the learning support team of the college. Therefore, if you do attend, you will not need to do anything additional to what you would normally do for this meeting. The observation notes will be carried out by me and all observation notes will be anonymous.

The second part of the study will involve a semi-structured interview carried out by me. The interview will be arranged at a time and place that is convenient for you. The interview will take up to an hour (max.) and this will include time at the start of the session to talk through the purposes of the study, expectations for the session, confidentiality and consent procedures; give

time for any questions regarding the research and interview; and a debriefing session at the end. The interview will focus on your experiences and understanding of how the college has accessed the young person's thoughts and opinions regarding the support they receive and how they have been included in the planning of the actions and outcomes for their support. The interview will be recorded and saved on a secure data storage at the University of Bristol.

The findings of all the data will be fed back to the college to be discussed. A final report will be written which will be circulated to the College, the participants of the study and XX EPS. The data will also be included in my thesis, a copy of which will be stored at the University of Bristol Library once it is complete.

- **What will happen if I don't take part?**

You can choose to withdraw from the study at any time. However, please note this could be problematic for the data analysis and research findings. Therefore, it would be preferable for participants not to withdraw after 1st March 2019.

- **Anonymisation**

No names will be written down in any observations or the interviews. Pseudonyms will be used in the interview transcripts, any reports given to the college or EPS and for the thesis.

- **Limits of confidentiality**

Confidentiality will be maintained by the use of anonymisation and pseudonyms.

An executive summary of the study will be provided to the SENCo and members of the Senior Leadership Team which will maintain the confidentiality of the participants.

If circumstances arise which indicate illegal activity, they will be addressed through the college's procedures.

- **What will my information be used for?**

The information you provide will be used to identify common themes and experiences of learning support co-ordinators across the four sites of the college working with young people who have EHCPs and who have gone through the Annual Review process at a Post-16 educational setting. This information will inform the future planning, decision-making, policy and practice for the College, to ensure that the support provided for learners with Special Educational Needs is based on the 'voice' of the learner. It will also be used to inform the practices of EPs when providing support to Post 16 settings and young people with Special Educational Needs.

For further information, please contact Pauline Cooper, Trainee Educational Psychologist/Researcher with the University of Bristol and XX Educational Psychology Service (pc16309@bristol.ac.uk). If you are not happy at any point and would like to speak to someone else or complain, please contact John Franey at 8 Priory Road, School for Policy Studies, Bristol, BS1 1TX; John.Franey@bristol.ac.uk.

Anonymised data will be available on the University of Bristol's secure data storage for future research projects. This study has been approved by the SPS Research Ethics Committee.

A study of how a college uses 'Person-Centred Planning' and accesses and uses the 'voice' of learners with Educational Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) to inform and plan their support.

Participant Information Sheet (Additional attendees of On Programme review and/or Annual Review Meeting)

- **What is the purpose of this study?**

The purpose of this study is to explore how a Post-16 setting accesses and uses 'Learner Voice' and 'Person Centred Planning' to support their learners with EHCPs and inform the Annual review meetings and outcomes. By using an approach called 'Illuminative Evaluation', I will use a range of methods (observations and interviews) to gain a full understanding of the processes and practices used in the college and gather the different perspectives and experiences of those who have been involved. The perspectives I will be gathering are those of the young person, their learning support worker and the learning support co-ordinators of the college site they attend. By 'illuminating' the processes, the information gained can be used:

- to inform the college's decision-making and policies;
- to develop further their ability to use the learner's 'voice' to inform and plan for their support;
- as a rich source of information for Educational Psychologists (EPs) (particularly those of the XX Educational Psychology Service/EPS) to help develop their understanding and practices within the Post-16 area of Special Educational Needs.

- **Why have I been chosen?**

The first phase of the study is to observe the Annual Review meetings of the young people involved in the study. By attending this meetings, you will be involved in this part of the study.

- **What will happen if I take part?**

If you consent to taking part in the study, you will attend and contribute to the Annual Review meeting just as you had intended and planned. You will not need to do anything additional. Notes will be taken throughout the observation and will be used as part of the data analysis for the project. Information recorded will be anonymous. The findings will be fed back to the college and a final report will be written and circulated to the college and the key recipients. The data will also be included in the write up of my thesis.

- **What will happen if I don't take part?**

You can choose to withdraw from the study at any time. However, please note this could be problematic for the data analysis and research findings. Therefore, it would be preferable for participants not to withdraw after 1st March 2019.

- **Anonymisation**

No names will be written down in any observations. Pseudonyms will be used in any reports given to the college or EPS and for the thesis.

- **Limits of confidentiality**

Confidentiality will be maintained by the use of anonymisation and pseudonyms.

An executive summary of the study will be provided to the SENCo and members of the Senior Leadership Team which will maintain the confidentiality of the participants.

If circumstances arise which indicate illegal activity, they will be addressed through the college's procedures.

- **What will my information be used for?**

The information obtained through the observations will be used to identify common themes of Annual Review meetings at a Post-16 educational setting, and will be combined with the findings from the second phase of the study which involves interviews with the key participants. This information will inform the future planning, decision-making, policy and practice for the College to ensure that the support provided for learners with Special Educational Needs is based on the 'voice' of the learner. It will also be used to inform the practices of EPs when providing support to Post 16 settings and young people with Special Educational Needs.

For further information, please contact Pauline Cooper, Trainee Educational Psychologist/Researcher with the University of Bristol and XX Educational Psychology Service (pc16309@bristol.ac.uk). If you are not happy at any point and would like to speak to someone else or complain, please contact John Franey at 8 Priory Road, School for Policy Studies, Bristol, BS1 1TX; John.Franey@bristol.ac.uk.

Anonymised data will be available on the University of Bristol's secure data storage for future research projects. This study has been approved by the SPS Research Ethics Committee

Appendix 5: Consent Forms



8 Priory Road, Bristol, BS8 1TZ

T: +44 (0) 117 954 6755

F: +44 (0) 117 954 6756

W: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/Depts/SPS>

A study of how a college uses 'Person-Centred Planning' and accesses and uses the 'voice' of learners with Educational Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) to inform and plan their support.

Consent Form (learner)

I have read and understood the information about the study on the Information Sheet and I consent to take part in this project.

I understand that the project is confidential, but there are some limits to this (e.g. illegal activities; harm to others; someone might recognise what I've said).

I have a copy of the 'Confidentiality Protocol' for the study.

I understand that if there is anything to do with illegal activity, or harm to others, it may be passed to an adult in the college.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study, although if I do, I should do this before March 1st 2019.

If I take part in the Annual Review, I am happy for the researcher to watch and take notes during this meeting.

I am happy for the interview which I will take part in to be digitally recorded, and for the researcher to write notes.

I understand that all the information will be anonymised (no names), and that it will be stored securely for 20 years, on a storage system at the University of Bristol. Other researchers will be able to read the anonymised data.

I have had the chance to ask any questions with my parents/carers, staff in the college or the researcher, and I give consent to take part in the study.

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

A study of how a college uses 'Person-Centred Planning' and accesses and uses the 'voice' of learners with Educational Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) to inform and plan their support.

Consent Form (College Staff Participant)

I confirm that I have read, and understood, the information regarding the above-named study on the Participant Information Sheet. On the basis of this information, I consent to take part in this research study.

I understand that the research is confidential, and that the limits to confidentiality have been made clear to me. I have received a copy of the confidentiality protocol for the study. I understand that information relating to illegal activity, or harm to others, may be passed to the appropriate authority.

I understand that I can withdraw my participation, although limits may be imposed on this if I make my request known after 1st March 2019.

If I take part in Annual Review, I am happy for the researcher to observe and take notes during this meeting.

I am happy for the interview which I will take part in to be digitally recorded and for written notes to be taken.

I understand that all data will be anonymised and that it will be stored securely for 20 years on an appropriate storage facility after completion of the research study. Anonymised data will be available for future use by other researchers on an open access basis. Consent forms will additionally be stored for 20 years.

I have had the opportunity to discuss any areas of concern, or clarify any points with the researcher, and on this basis give my consent to participate in the study mentioned above.

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

A study of how a college uses 'Person-Centred Planning' and accesses and uses the 'voice' of learners with Educational Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) to inform and plan their support.

Consent Form (Additional Attendees)

I confirm that I have read, and understood, the information regarding the above-named study on the Participant Information Sheet. On the basis of this information, I consent to take part in this research study.

I understand that the research is confidential, and that the limits to confidentiality have been made clear to me. I have received a copy of the confidentiality protocol for the study. I understand that information relating to illegal activity, or harm to others, may be passed to the appropriate authority.

I understand that I can withdraw my participation, although limits may be imposed on this if I make my request known after 1st March 2019.

If I take part in the Annual Review, I am happy for the researcher to observe and take notes during these meetings.

I understand that all data will be anonymised and that it will be stored securely for 20 years on an appropriate storage facility after completion of the research study. Anonymised data will be available for future use by other researchers on an open access basis. Consent forms will additionally be stored for 20 years.

I have had the opportunity to discuss any areas of concern, or clarify any points with the researcher, and on this basis give my consent to participate in the study mentioned above.

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 6: Confidentiality Protocol



School for Policy Studies

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A study of how a college uses 'Person-Centred Planning' and accesses and uses the 'voice' of learners with Educational Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) to inform and plan their support.

Confidentiality Protocol (learner)

This research project looks at how your college listens to the voices of learners with EHCPs, and also how they use 'Person Centred' planning to help support the learners.

No names will be written down and all the information will be kept confidential. This means no-one can know who it is about.

However, if something you tell me is about something illegal or about someone being harmed, it may not be possible to keep it confidential.

If this happens, I will need to tell a safe adult in the college as soon as possible to decide what needs to happen next. If this has to happen, I will talk to you about it first if I can but I will still have to tell the safe adult in the college.

During the interview, you will be asked not to use the names of other learners or adults. This is to protect you as well as them as much as possible.

If you agree to take part in the study, this means you agree to follow the information on this sheet.

A study of how a college uses ‘Person-Centred Planning’ and accesses and uses the ‘voice’ of learners with Educational Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) to inform and plan their support.

Confidentiality Protocol (College Staff Participant)

This research project is designed to explore how a college accesses and uses the voice of learners with EHCPs, and how they use ‘Person Centred’ planning to carry out Annual reviews.

All data obtained through this study will be anonymised and treated with confidentiality. However, there are limits to this confidentiality. In the event that information is given relating to an illegal activity, or to an individual(s) being harmed, it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality.

In this instance, any issues of concern will be discussed with the Safeguarding officer of the college and/or the Research Supervisor as soon as possible after the incident in order to obtain advice or direction. The relevant/appropriate authority may need to be informed.

The researcher will endeavour to speak to participants and alert them before hand in the event that this needs to happen, however this may not always be possible. The researchers will still need to pass this information on.

In addition, participants are asked not to use names of other learners or adults during the interviews in order to protect anonymity and confidentiality. Although names will not be used, due to the nature of the sampling process and data collection (e.g. members of the learning support team will be aware of possible learner participants of the study and their associated learning support worker), there are limits to confidentiality as it is likely that recipients of the research who are familiar with the learners may recognise some of the experiences that are reported.

By agreeing to participate in this study, you are agreeing to be bound by the terms of this confidentiality protocol and agree that the information you share will be treated in this manner.

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W: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/Depts/SPS>

A study of how a college uses 'Person-Centred Planning' and accesses and uses the 'voice' of learners with Educational Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) to inform and plan their support.

Confidentiality Protocol (Additional Attendees)

This research project is designed to explore how a college accesses and uses the voice of learners with EHCPs, and how they use 'Person Centred' planning to carry out Annual reviews.

All data obtained through this study will be anonymised and treated with confidentiality. However, there are limits to this confidentiality. In the event that information is given relating to an illegal activity, or to an individual(s) being harmed, it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality.

In this instance, any issues of concern will be discussed with the Safeguarding officer of the college and/or the Research Supervisor as soon as possible after the incident in order to obtain advice or direction. The relevant/appropriate authority may need to be informed.

The researcher will endeavour to speak to participants and alert them beforehand in the event that this needs to happen, however this may not always be possible. The researcher will still need to pass this information on.

In addition, participants are asked not to use names of other learners or adults during the interviews in order to protect anonymity and confidentiality. Although names will not be used, due to the nature of the sampling process and data collection (i.e. members of the learning support team will be aware of possible learner participants of the study and their associated learning support worker), there are limits to confidentiality as it is likely that recipients of the research who are familiar with the learners may recognise some of the experiences that are reported.

By agreeing to participate in this study, you are agreeing to be bound by the terms of this confidentiality protocol and agree that the information you share will be treated in this manner.

Appendix 7: Support sheet for presentation to learners

How do colleges ask learners (with EHCPs) their thoughts and opinions to help support them?

1. Why you?

You are a learner at the college with an EHCP.

2. What I would like to know:

How the college asks for your thoughts and ideas on how to support you.

How you feel about this.

What you think works well and what do you think could be even better.

3. Why do I want to know this?

- To help the college do this even better.
- To help other Educational Psychologists understand colleges better.
- To give you the opportunity to say what you think and how you feel about it.
- To help other learners in the future.

4. What will happen if you choose take part?

- I will observe your Annual Review meeting.
- I will interview you and record this.
- I will interview your learning support worker (LSW) and learning support co-ordinator for your college site.
- Nobody's name will be written down.

5. If you would like to take part:

Sign the consent sheet or take the information away to read through on your own or with someone you can talk to about it.

Give the consent sheet to your LSW or Ms XX to give to me.

You can choose to pull out from all or part of the study up to 1st March 2019.

Appendix 8: Observation Pro-forma

Record of Observation

Date:	Time:
Student:	Age:
Attendees:	
Additional notes:	

Time:	Person speaking:	Information discussed/actions agreed:	Additional notes/thoughts:

Appendix 9: College Documentation

Guidance, Inclusion, Support and Transition Policy

If you would like this document in an alternate format

Please contact the Human Resources Department

Prepared by:	XX
Job Title/Role:	Vice Principal
Ref. No.: Q/P 165	Date of this version: September 2017 Review date: July 2018 (Subject to any Legislative changes) Upload to College website? No Upload to e-Campus? No
Approved by:	SLT
Date of Approval:	13 th September 2017

Main aim and purpose of the policy:	This policy outlines the College's approach to Guidance, Inclusion, Support and Transition (GIST)				
Is this policy (or its constituent parts) relevant to a general equality duty? (please tick)	This policy development will assist in the elimination of unlawful discrimination and/or harassment of identified groups?	Implementation of this policy will promote equal opportunities for identified groups?	Implementation of this policy will promote positive attitudes and participation between groups?	Implementation of this policy will promote good relations between groups?	
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Gender Reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Race or Ethnicity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Religion or Belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Marriage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Pregnancy/ Maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Carers/ Care givers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Persons in care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Specify any groups for which there is evidence or reason to believe that some groups or individuals could be affected differently:					
None					
How much evidence is there:	None	A little	Some	A lot	
Is there any concern that the policy may operate in a discriminatory way?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	None	A little	Some	A lot	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Assessed relevance to equality (tick one row only)	High	Med	Low	None	Brief reason for this assessment
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Gender Reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Race or Ethnicity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Religion or Belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Marriage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Pregnancy/ Maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Carers/ Care givers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
What is the next step? (tick one only)	What priority level is this policy?			Has the Policy been sent for Full EQIA, or do you believe the policy should have a Full EQIA?	
	High <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Medium <input type="checkbox"/>	Low <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I am satisfied that an initial screening has been carried out on this policy/procedure and a full Impact Assessment is not required					
Completed by:		Position: Vice Principal		Date: 07.09.17	

Guidance, Inclusion, Support and Transition Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. At XX we aim to deliver a learning experience that meets and exceeds the expectations of all our learners whatever their starting points and aspirations. This policy outlines the College's approach to Guidance, Inclusion, Support and Transition (GIST).
- 1.2. This policy is informed by, and reflects, the College's Single Equality Plan, the SEN Code of Practice and other funding bodies' requirements relating to inclusion.

2. Statement

- 2.1. At XX College, all learners will benefit from high quality guidance and support so that they can realise their aspirations and achieve their full potential.
- 2.2. Guidance
 - 2.2.1. To ensure effective transition and progression, all prospective and current learners will have access to impartial, personalised and constructive pre-course, on-course and progression guidance.
 - 2.2.2. XX commits to ensuring a truly fair and transparent approach to pre-course advice and assessment.
- 2.3. Inclusion
 - 2.3.1. To establish an inclusive learning experience matched to learners' needs, abilities and aspirations we will employ a 'right learner, right course, right support' ethos.
- 2.4. Support
 - 2.4.1. At XX College we aim to support learners' identified needs. We will employ fair, consistent and transparent approaches to assessing need and providing support. This could include, pastoral and welfare support, additional learning support and/or academic support.
- 2.5. Transition

- 2.5.1. To support learners in achieving a successful beginning to College life, XX College will provide a range of transition and taster opportunities to help prepare learners to make the most of their time at College.
- 2.5.2. Every learner's progression destination is important to us. We will ensure all learners have a personalised long term development plan (LTDP) to help them realise their potential.
- 2.5.3. The College will work with external partners, agencies and employers to create and enhance progression pathways for learners.

3. Objectives

- 3.1. To ensure the provision of consistently high quality timely advice, guidance and support to enhance learners' opportunities and experiences, and their success and progress.
- 3.2. To deliver measurable improvements to the learner journey in the following ways:
 - 3.2.1. Reduction in the number of learner withdrawals;
 - 3.2.2. Improvements in learner achievement, particularly in underperforming areas;
 - 3.2.3. Increase in the numbers of learners accessing targeted support and guidance;
 - 3.2.4. Increase in learner satisfaction with support and guidance; and
 - 3.2.5. Improved progression into meaningful destinations.

4. Implementation

- 4.1. Implementation of the policy will be monitored by the SLT and the Safeguarding, Wellbeing, Equality & Diversity Group (SWEDG).
- 4.2. Guidance materials for staff relating to the implementation of the policy have been produced to ensure consistent and transparent approaches to GIST.
- 4.3. Publicity materials for learners, parents and carers relating to the implementation of the policy have been produced to ensure consistent and transparent access to GIST.

- 4.4. Regular training and development opportunities will be provided to ensure staff and managers understand their responsibilities in relation to implementing the policy and related codes of practice.
- 4.5. A workflow Total Support Guarantee on-line referral form has been developed to ensure an efficient and auditable process to access additional on-course pastoral and learning support.

5. Responsibilities

5.1. Corporation and Executive Committee:

- 5.1.1. Are responsible for monitoring the implementation and impact of the policy.

5.2. Heads of Departments (Corporate)/Heads of Sectors must:

- 5.2.1. Ensure sufficient team participation in related training and development in order to implement the policy and related codes of practice, as outlined in section 6 below. Monitor and ensure full compliance with implementing the policy and related procedures consistently for all learners. Work collaboratively with internal and external partners to maximise the impact of the policy.

5.3. The Head of Quality, Resources and Performance must:

- 5.3.1. Monitor the impact of the policy on identified equalities groups.

6. Related Guidance, Strategies and Legislation

- 6.1. Code of Practice – Guidance see Appendix A
- 6.2. Code of Practice – Inclusion see Appendix B
- 6.3. Code of Practice – Support see Appendix C
- 6.4. Code of Practice – Transition see Appendix D
- 6.5. [XX Total Support Guarantee guidance materials.](#)
- 6.6. [SEN Code of Practice.](#)
- 6.7. [Quality Strategy.](#)
- 6.8. [Teaching and Learning Strategy.](#)
- 6.9. [Curriculum Strategy.](#)
- 6.10. [Single Equality Policy.](#)
- 6.11. [Applications, Admissions and Enrolments Policy & Procedure.](#)

7. Procedure

- 7.1. Procedures relating to this policy are outlined in the attached codes of practice and guidance materials (see appendices A – G).

Appendix A - XX Guidance Code of Practice

1. Introduction

This Code of Practice relates to the XX Guidance, Inclusion, Support and Transition Policy (GIST). The policy aims to ensure that the College delivers a learning experience that meets and exceeds the expectations of all our learners, whatever their starting points. This Guidance Code of Practice outlines the College's expectations in relation to the provision of impartial, personalised and constructive pre-course, on-course and progression guidance. It does not replace or conflict with the College's Careers Policy.

2. References in the Code

This Code refers to a number of related codes of practice and guidance materials. These can be found on SharePoint. Specific codes of practice relevant to this policy are:

- [XX Total Support Guarantee](#)
- Inclusion Code of Practice – see Appendix B
- Support Code of Practice – see Appendix C
- Transition Code of Practice – see Appendix D
- [SEN Code of Practice](#)
- [Learner Charter and Codes of Conduct](#)
- [Careers Policy](#)
- [Statutory Guidance in relation to Careers Guidance](#), including [from the CDI](#)

3. Part one: Overview of the Guidance Code of Practice

Our approach to providing guidance for learners will be one that helps to raise aspirations and support learners in developing and implementing their long-term development plans (LTDP), aiding progress towards achieving meaningful and aspirational goals. Learners can approach any member of staff for guidance; typically, this may include Personal and Subject Tutors, Work Experience Coaches, Sports Coaches, Learning Mentors and Careers Advisors. Guidance for learners will be provided across the following 3 stages of the learner experience:

- Pre-course
- On-course
- Transition

Guidance available for all learners will include:

- Guidance on developing and realising a personalised LTDP

- Impartial and accurate advice on career options; study pathways and learning modes; educational providers; qualifications framework etc.
- Guidance on finding a suitable work experience opportunity
- Advice and information in relation opportunities to enhance employability skills
- Advice on a range of external agency and employer support

Through regular monitoring and review, we will aim to ensure individual learners receive personalised and meaningful high quality advice and guidance.

Part two: Code of Practice - Statement of Intent

Working collaboratively with individual learners and others, the Guidance Code of Practice establishes the following principles:

- 3.1. **Pre-course guidance** for learners prior to studying at XX College will aim to match each learner's potential to their current and future needs and aspirations. It will form the basis of the learner's LTDP.
- 3.2. **On-course guidance** for learners who are studying at XX College will provide multiple opportunities for learners to review their progress and the ongoing appropriateness of their LTDP.
- 3.3. **On-progression guidance** towards the end of a course of study will provide a range of opportunities for learners to source personalised advice that is clear, accurate and helpful, and helps them to take their next steps towards employment and independent living.

4. Relevant Guidance Materials

Evidence to support the implementation of this Code can be accessed in various formats. Click [here](#) for a link to the XX Total Support Guarantee Guide for Staff.

The XX Careers Policy can be found [here](#).

5. Authors of Code of Practice

- Careers Adviser
- Vice Principal

Appendix B - XX Inclusion Code of Practice

1. Introduction

This Code of Practice relates to the XX Guidance, Inclusion, Support and Transition Policy (GIST). The policy and particularly this code of practice seek to ensure that XX offers an inclusive learning experience matched to learners' needs, abilities and aspirations; through a 'right learner, right course, right support' ethos.

2. References in the Code

This Code refers to a number of XX Policies and related codes of practice and guidance materials:

- [XX Total Support Guarantee](#)
- [XX Single Equality Policy & Public Sector Duty Action Plan](#)
- [XX Enabling Positive Behaviour and Disciplinary Policy](#)
- [XX Applications, Admissions and Enrolments Policy](#)
- [XX Criminal Convictions \[Risk assessment \(learners\)\] Procedure](#)
- [XX16-19 Bursary Fund and 19+ Bursary Policy and Procedures for the Disbursement of Funds in 2017-2018](#)
- [XX Impact Assessment and Analysis \(IAA\) Toolkit](#)
- [University of Access Agreement](#)

3. Part one: Overview of the Inclusion Code of Practice

XX strives to be an inclusive College where the human rights principles of: fairness, respect, equality, dignity and autonomy are promoted as part of our everyday goals and behaviour. We are committed to full participation, widening access and the promotion of learner success and thereby aim to achieve inclusion through the **XX Total Support Guarantee**. The Total Support Guarantee provides a comprehensive range of "wrap-around support" to assist learners onto the right course, keep them on track and guide them through the right steps for successful achievement and progression.

Part two: Code of Practice

The Inclusion Code of Practice establishes the following principles:

- 3.1. Our approach to providing **Equality of Opportunity** will be one that respects the full spectrum of ability and vulnerability and takes a strategic approach to enable and empower learners to fully engage in their College experience and develop the skills necessary to achieve and progress independently.

Based upon the College's strategic priorities, and in accordance with the College's Support Code of Practice, we will:

- Support the inclusion, continuation and success of learners from low participation neighbourhoods, care leavers, children in care, BME learners, and those with disabilities and other difficulties.
- Comply fully with our obligations to promote equality and prevent discrimination. XX strives to foster good relations with all, to achieve social inclusion and enable learners to achieve their full potential.
- Provide outreach activities and planned programmes of schools liaison, advice and guidance that tackle silos of low aspiration.
- Engage in collaborative activity through the Concorde Partnership and our alliance with the University of xx to further widen participation.

- 3.2. Our approach to securing **Fairness and Respect** will be one that ensures learners are able to participate, achieve and progress in a culture of fairness and respect that ensures the needs of vulnerable learners are met while maintaining the highest standards and academic rigour.

To this end we will:

- Embed fairness and respect in all our policy and decision making processes. We will provide services and support 'with' people and not 'for' them.
- Support the inclusion, continuation and success of disadvantaged learners and those entitled to free school meals.
- Continue to remain committed to ensuring that all learners do better than expected by monitoring those 'at risk' and improving distance travelled.
- Ensure that all learners receive the appropriate advice and support so they can empower themselves to make choices about, and have control over, their own education and progression.

- 3.3. Our approach to ensuring **Dignity and Autonomy** will be one that champions the rich and diverse range of learner strengths and needs; by recognising those strengths and actively meeting need we will raise standards and improve the experience of all.

XX College will, **without judgement**:

- Safeguard the interests of all learners.
- Celebrate the diversity of culture, ethnicity, language, belief and individuality.
- Act swiftly and decisively to eradicate discrimination, harassment and intolerance; to ensure that our campuses remain a safe community, free of fear.

4. Relevant Guidance Materials

Evidence to support the implementation of this Code can be accessed in various formats. Click [here](#) for a link to the **TSG Referral form** for additional guidance.

The XX College 'Public Sector Duty Action Plan' can be found [here](#).

The Office for Fair Access (OFFA) is an independent public body that helps safeguard and promote fair access to higher education. [OFFA](#)

5. Authors of Code of Practice

- Head Quality, Resources and Performance
- Associate Dean (HE/Adult)

Appendix C - XX Support Code of Practice

1. Introduction

This Code of Practice relates to the XX Guidance, Inclusion, Support and Transition Policy (GIST). The policy aims to ensure that the College delivers a learning experience that meets and exceeds the expectations of all our learners, whatever their starting points. This Support Code of Practice outlines the College's expectations in relation to the provision of pastoral and welfare support, additional learning support and/or academic support.

2. References in the Code

This Code refers to a number of related codes of practice and guidance materials. These can be found on SharePoint on the XX Total Support Guarantee page. Specific codes of practice relevant to this policy are:

- [The Total Support Guarantee](#)
- Guidance Code of Practice – see Appendix A
- Inclusion Code of Practice – see Appendix B
- Transition Code of Practice – see Appendix D
- [SEN Code of Practice](#)
- [Learner Charter and Codes of Conduct](#)

3. Part one: Overview of the Support Code of Practice

In order to provide timely, accessible and consistent support for all learners at risk of not achieving their qualification or progressing to their planned destination or learning goal, the College has developed the **XX Total Support Guarantee**. This **Guarantee** will provide a comprehensive range of “wrap-around support” to keep learners on track and guide them through the right steps for successful achievement and progression.

Support available for learners will include pastoral and welfare support, additional learning support (ALS) and academic support. Personalised support will be provided following a fair and consistent process of assessment based on individual need and following current funding guidance. Assessment decisions relating to the provision of personalised support will be based on a published referral process as described by the: “XX Total Support Guarantee” referral form; bursary criteria; ALS criteria; and the SEN Code of Practice. Through regular monitoring and review, we will aim to ensure individual learners receive the level of support they require. Information relating to the **XX Total Support Guarantee** will be published in a range of accessible formats. Records of the support provided will be kept on the College's ProMonitor or other confidential systems, with due regard for data protection where required.

Part two: Code of Practice - Statement of Intent

The Support Code of Practice establishes the following principles:

- 3.1. Our approach to providing **Pastoral and Welfare support** will be one that enables and empowers learners to fully engage in their College experience and also to develop the skills required to achieve and progress independently. Where necessary we will act as advocates for individual learners to facilitate access to support from a range of external agencies.
- 3.2. Our approach to providing personalised **Additional Learning support (ALS)** will be one that ensures learners receiving ALS are able to develop independent learning and study skills and achieve and progress as well as their peers. The provision of High Needs Support adheres to funding guidance and eligibility criteria provided by the SEN Code of Practice, and the ESFA or HEFCE. The provision of personalised ALS adheres to the **XX Total Support Guarantee** and adheres to relevant ESFA or HEFCE funding guidance and eligibility criteria.
- 3.3. Our approach to providing **Academic support** will be one that ensures that learners who are falling behind with their work or at risk of not achieving their potential are able to access help with English and maths, revision or catch-up support through scheduled and targeted sessions based on personalised action plans and targets.

4. Relevant Guidance Materials

Evidence to support the implementation of this Code can be accessed in various formats. Click [here](#) for a link to the **TSG Referral form** for additional guidance.

5. Authors of Code of Practice

- Vice Principal
- Head of Learning Support

Appendix D - XX Transition Code of Practice

1. Introduction

This Code of Practice relates to the XX Guidance, Inclusion, Support and Transition Policy (GIST). The policy aims to ensure that the College delivers a learning experience that meets and exceeds the expectations of all our learners, whatever their starting points. This Transition Code of Practice outlines the College's expectations in relation to the provision of impartial guidance, support and information in relation to the transition of learners onto XX College provision, between courses and departments within XX, and onwards from XX College.

2. References in the Code

This Code refers to a number of related codes of practice and guidance materials. Specific codes of practice relevant to this policy are:

- [The XX Total Support Guarantee](#)
- Guidance Code of Practice – see Appendix A
- Inclusion Code of Practice – see Appendix B
- Support Code of Practice – see Appendix C
- [SEN Code of Practice](#)
- [Learner Charter and Codes of Conduct](#)

3. Part one: Overview of the Transition Code of Practice

Transition arrangements at XX aim to provide timely, accessible, consistent and impartial support and guidance for all learners who are at one or more of the 3 following stages:

- applicant
- enrolled learner
- progressing learner

We will ensure the soundest educational decisions are taken in relation to transition into and out of the College for all learners and that these decisions enhance opportunities for progression and transition as part of the XX Total Support Guarantee. This Guarantee will provide a comprehensive range of “wrap-around support” to keep learners on track and guide them through the right steps for successful achievement and progression. Transition support available for all learners will include:

- a “Long Term Development Plan” (LTDP)
- impartial advice and guidance at Open Events, Interviews and Schools Liaison Events

- regular 1:1 meetings with Tutors to assess progress against and review LTDPs
- access to careers advice and exposure to external providers (where appropriate)
- exploration of progression pathways
- follow-up communication upon progression out of XX College.

Through regular monitoring and review, we will aim to ensure individual learners receive the level of transition support and guidance they require. Information relating to the XX Total Support Guarantee is published in a range of accessible formats. Records of the support provided will be kept on the College's ProMonitor or other confidential systems, with due regard for data protection where required.

Part two: Code of Practice - Statement of Intent

The Transition Code of Practice establishes the following principles:

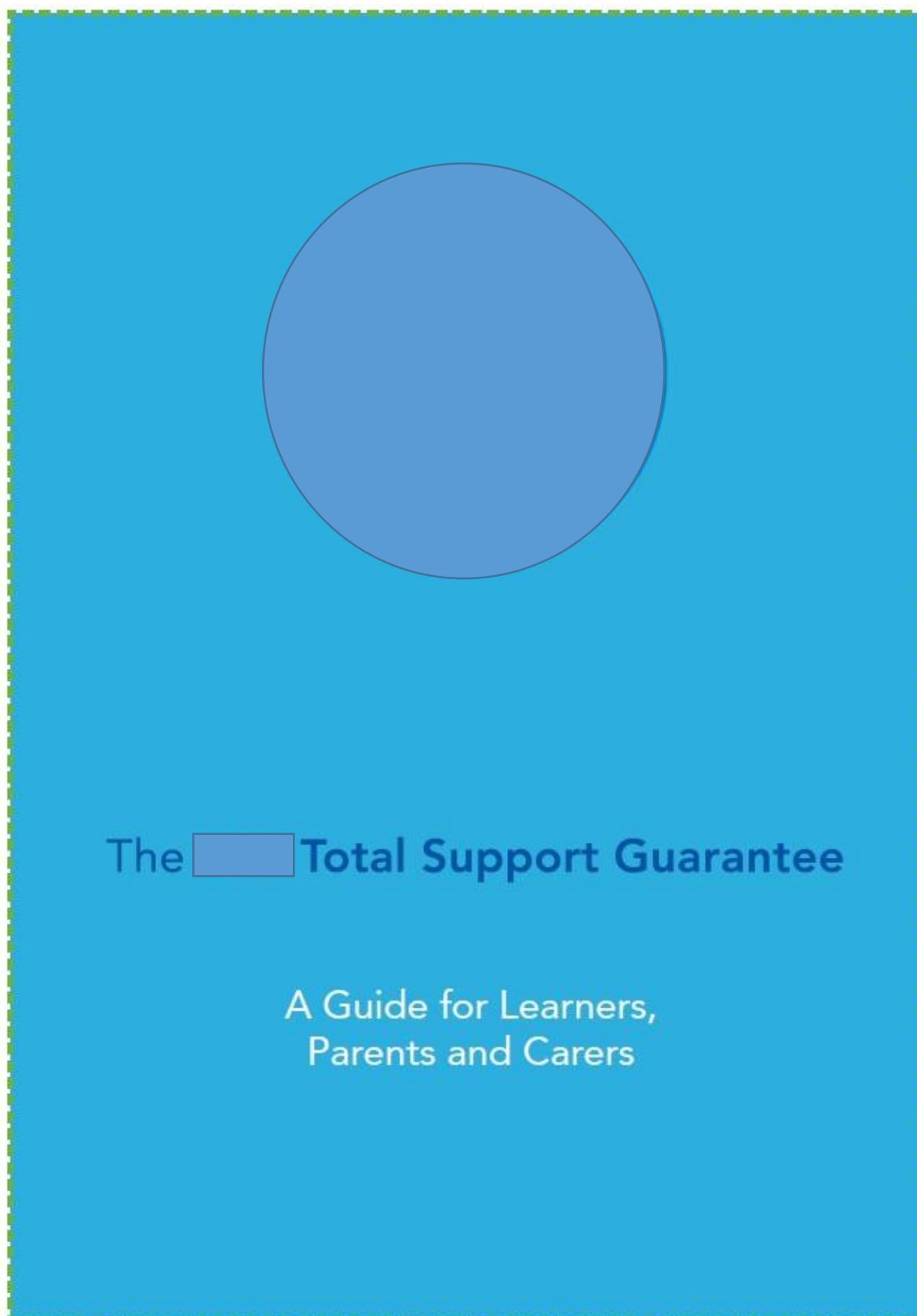
- 3.1. Our approach to providing **Transition Support and Guidance into XX College** will be one that enables and empowers learners, parents/carers and other relevant parties to fully engage in the learner's future College experience. We aim to help learners to make informed decisions to ensure learners are only placed on appropriate provision that leads to progression and achievement of suitably challenging end-goals, as per their long-term ambitions.
- 3.2. Our approach to providing **Transition Support and Guidance for learners who are enrolled with XX College** will be one that works with the learner in developing a Long Term Development Plan (LTDP) that supports the learner to make progress towards their long-term ambitions. This LTDP will be reviewed regularly with the learner ensuring that the learner has realistic but challenging individual targets to aid progress towards the achievement of an overall long-term ambition.
- 3.3. Our approach to providing **Transition Support and Guidance towards the end of a course of study** will be one that ensures meaningful and realistic potential progression routes are provided to the learner at the earliest possible opportunity and the LTDP makes reference to these, as well as potential alternatives. All of these routes will support the overall long-term ambition of the learner.

4. Relevant Guidance Materials

Evidence to support the implementation of this Code can be accessed in various formats. Click [here](#) for a link to the XX Total Support Guarantee Guide.

5. Authors of Code of Practice

- Director of Curriculum 16-18
- Head of Additional Learning Support
- Head of Department P4W&L



Introduction

Support Guidance Success

The [redacted] Total Support Guarantee is designed to provide you with the support and guidance you need to successfully achieve your ambitions and potential.

Our highly skilled teams will help you to access the right support when you need it, including additional learning support, pastoral and welfare support, and academic and study skills support. The Total Support Guarantee is available for all learners on funded learning programmes.



Each curriculum department is supported by a team of specialist learning support workers who can provide individual and in-class support for if you face barriers to learning.



Our Learner Services teams can provide a range of advice and guidance to help you attend college and keep you on track. We can help you to access counselling support; careers, finance and bursaries guidance; or personal support from our team of learning mentors.



All full time students benefit from access to a personal tutor who will help to signpost you to a range of academic support available at the college. This includes help from our English and Maths Extra teams, assignment and revision sessions with lecturers and study skills support in our Learning Resource Centres.

This short guide provides an introduction to the range of support we can provide to help you along the way to succeed in your studies whilst at [redacted]. For more information, speak to your personal tutor or pop in to the Learner Services and Learning Support Office at any of our campuses.

May I take this opportunity to wish you the very best for your studies at [redacted]

[redacted]
Vice Principal Learner Services and Quality
September 2014





Total Support Guarantee Support Roles and Responsibilities

The Role of the Personal Tutor

Personal Tutors are responsible for the overall supervision of your academic progress on your study programme and ensuring that where necessary you are signposted to additional pastoral support (from a Learning Mentor) or additional learning support (from a Learning Support Worker)

The Role of the Assessor

If you are on an apprenticeship or work-based programme, your **Assessor** will have a vital role in ensuring you are appropriately supported. Your Assessor will also monitor your progress within all the other elements of the apprenticeship framework and ensure any necessary support is in place and is effective.

The Role of the Learning Support Workers

Learning Support Workers will provide additional learning support if you need it. Your Learning Support Worker will work together with Personal Tutors and Learning Mentors where required in order to ensure you receive the learning support you need to help you achieve your qualification and progression goals.

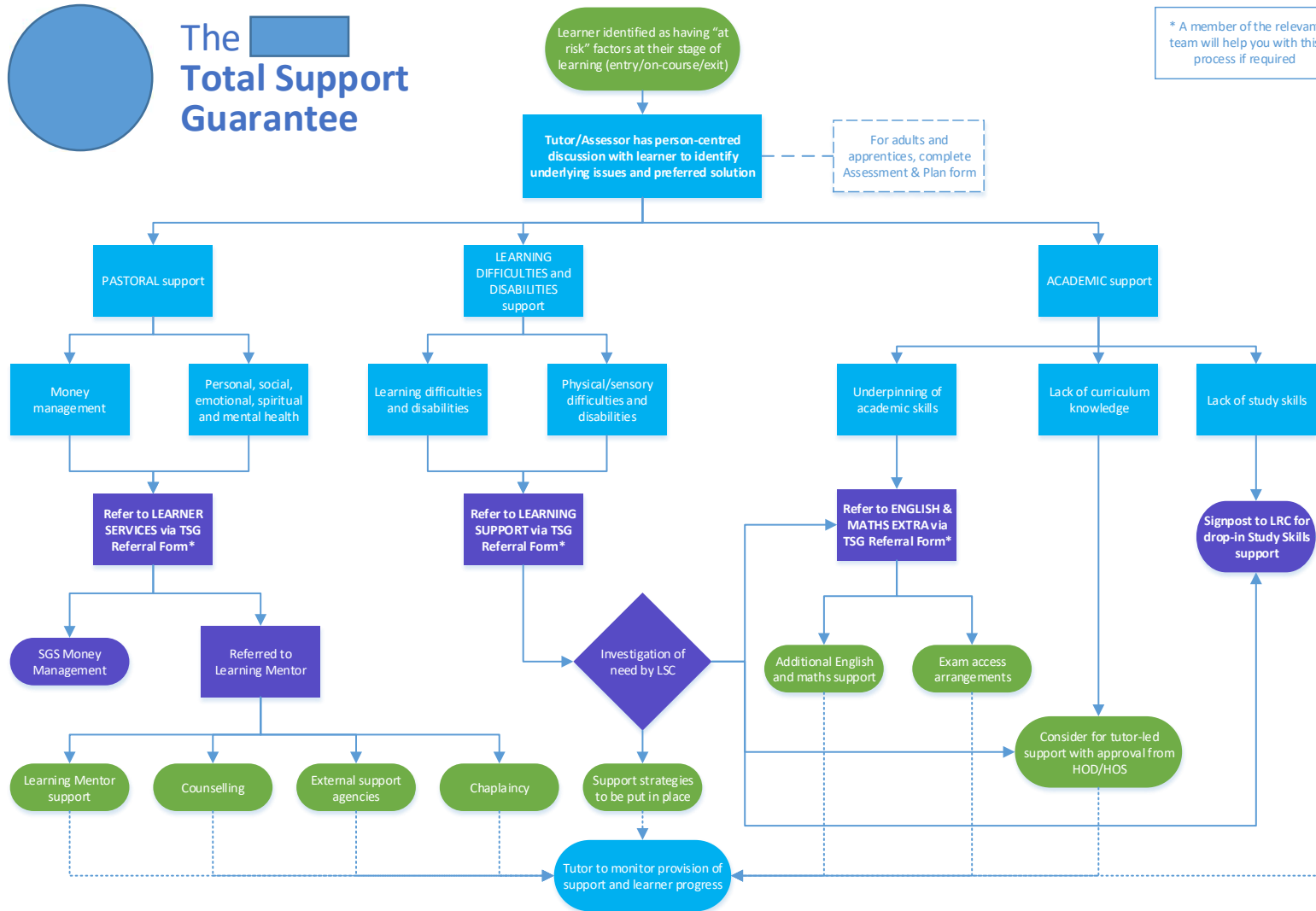
The Role of the Learning Mentor

Learning Mentors will provide pastoral support for you if you need it. Your Learning Mentor will work together with Personal Tutors and Learning Support workers where required to help you receive the support and guidance you need to achieve your qualification and progression goals.



The  **Total Support Guarantee**

Appendix G – Total Support Guarantee Flow Chart



Learner Charter and Codes of Conduct

The College's commitment to provide you with a learning experience that meets and exceeds your expectations whatever your starting point and aspirations. Our mission is to positively change people's lives and add value to the social and economic wellbeing of our communities and we will do this by providing high quality, innovative, accessible education and training in a safe and friendly culture of mutual respect and support. The Learner Code of Conduct sets out the College's behaviour expectations for an outstanding learning experience.

At XX College we are committed to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity by providing high quality guidance and support to help you achieve your potential.

We will:

- Maintain a strong focus on employability in all that we do
- Provide you with honest, impartial and personalised pre-course, on-course and progression guidance
- Employ a "right learner, right course, right support" ethos
- Implement fair, consistent and transparent approaches to assess your needs
- Provide the support you need to successfully complete your programme of study
- Develop your employability skills, including Maths and English, to help you progress to further study or work
- Ensure you have a long-term development plan to help you with your transition into work
- Do all that we can to keep you safe and teach you how to stay safe
- Maintain a respectful, tolerant and inclusive College environment so that all, whatever their faith or religious beliefs, can study and learn

We will provide:

- A prompt response to your application
- Accurate information about the College, the courses, the training available and likely costs
- A consistent focus on you, your achievements and your progression
- A Progress Tutor (if you are studying part-time in the evening, your class teacher will be your Progress Tutor)
- Regular one-to-one Progress Reviews for all full-time learners. These include setting and agreeing targets, reviewing your progress, planning how you can achieve your targets and guidance on the steps you need to take to achieve your long term development plan. If you are a part-time learner, one-to-one support will occur during course time
- A planned learning programme with a range of high quality teaching, learning, assessment and support opportunities appropriate to the course and your needs
- Updates on your progress through regular written reports and parents' evenings (if you are under 19)
- Assessments which are planned, will challenge your abilities and recognise your progress. Assessments will be returned within 15 College working days
- Ongoing feedback on your progress to help you improve the quality of your work and achieve your potential
- Careers guidance and support with UCAS applications
- Social, sporting and enrichment activities, for example, through the Student Union
- Advice and guidance on alternative opportunities if you and your tutor agree that your course is not meeting your needs
- Regular consultation of your views to inform and guide the College offer

The Student Union will:

- Provide fair and transparent elections for Student Union posts
- Run activities, clubs, campaigns and events for you
- Represent you and your views to the Senior Leadership Team and Governors

At the end of the course, we will:

- Provide a record of achievement (for example, an examination certificate, course certificate or a record of attendance) on request
- Provide a reference on request and
- Contact you to find out how you have progressed to further education and training or employment

If you have a question, suggestion or concern about your course, please speak to your tutor, subject teacher or learning mentor. If this is not possible, you should speak to the Head of Department. If the matter is not sorted out, you should speak to your Head of Sector. You can find out who the Head of Department or Head of Sector is by:

- looking in your course handbook
- asking at Reception
- contacting Learner Services

Formal complaints, compliments or suggestions can be made through submission of the appropriate form, available at all campus receptions, or by email

For more information about our policies and procedures, read our: Single Equality Policy, Health & Safety Policy, Compliments, Suggestions & Complaints Policy and

Procedure, Appeals against Assessment decisions

Code of Practice and the Enabling Positive

Behaviour & Learner Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, all of which can be found on the

College website

College Learner Code of Conduct

This Learner Code of Conduct sets out the College's behaviour expectations for an outstanding learning experience. As a learner, the College expects the highest standards of behaviour from you whilst on College premises and offsite when representing the College. Failure to meet these behaviour standards will trigger the use of the College's Enabling Positive Behaviour and Learner Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. The learner Charter sets out how we will work in partnership with you and your peers. We aim to provide a respectful, safe, supportive and successful learning environment for all.

Behaviour Expectations As a learner, we expect you to:

Prepare:

- Wear and display your lanyard around your neck with your ID card visible
- Attend all aspects of your study programme, including Maths and English and any other required activities
- Be punctual and ready to learn
- Bring all required equipment to study

Aim High:

- Work hard, challenge yourself and aim high
- Fully commit to your learning and achieving your targets

Be safe and respectful:

- Be polite and treat everyone with dignity and respect
- Be kind to others and respect the College environment
- Stay safe and do not put others at risk
- Communicate regularly with your tutor
- Seek help at the earliest opportunity from the College should you need it, for example by contacting your tutor or a learning mentor

You may:

- Only smoke in the designated smoking areas whilst on College premises

You must not:

- Behave in a disruptive, aggressive, abusive, intimidating or anti-social way
- Disrupt or interfere with the education, learning or personal safety of other learners
- Display, communicate or circulate any material by any means which is designed to cause offence, incite violence or hatred or distress to others
- Communicate or send annoying, obscene, malicious messages in person or by telephone, text message, email or any source of social media
- Be intoxicated whilst at College due to alcohol or use of recreational drugs or so-called “legal highs”
- Consume or possess toxic, dangerous or controlled substances
- Cause malicious damage to, or theft of, the property of other learners, staff or visitors to the College
- Gain unauthorised access, or make modifications to College files or computer materials
- Carry any weapons or any other object with the intention or purpose of use in a threatening way
- Take part in any illegal activity
- Behave in any way which adversely affects the reputation of the College

Appendix 10: Annual Review paperwork for EHCP reviews

The education provider should complete this form, on at least an annual basis, in respect of every young person on roll for whom the Local Authority (LA) continues to maintain an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP).

Reviews must focus on the young person's progress towards achieving the outcomes specified in the EHCP.

Date of review		Date of last review	
Date of current EHCP		Local Authority	

1. Details of the Young Person

Surname		Forenames	
Date of birth		Gender	
Primary need		Secondary need	
Address			
Contact details		Ethnicity	
CiC Care Leaver Young Carer	No/Yes No/Yes No/Yes	If yes, please give details of the Social Worker with contact number	

2. Details of the Young Person's parents/carers

Name of parents/carers	
Address & contact number (if different from above)	

3. Education Placement Details

Name of Educational Placement		Type of setting	
Admission date		Academic Year	
Current course		Does the young person receive Free College Meals?	
College attendance		Exclusions	
Days in college	M	T	W
			T
			F

4. People and Services invited to this review

Name	Role	Advice / contribution included	Attended review
	Learner		
	Parent / Carer		
	Parent / Carer		
	Learning Support Coordinator		
	Learning Support Worker		
	SEND Manager		
	Tutor		
	Tutor		

5. My Views, Interests and Aspirations

What is important to me? What are my aspirations and goals? What does and does not help me? What are my strengths and areas for development? What are my greatest achievements so far? What do people admire about me? N.B. Attach additional documents if appropriate, e.g. pen profiles or presentations etc.

6. My Family's Views

Parents / Carers are invited to submit a separate report or to comment verbally on their child's academic, social and emotional progress, their learning needs, their communication skills and their progress towards independence.

7. My Post 16 Programme

Course Name	Level	Current Grade / Level	Predicted Grade / Level	Comments
Placement history (to include previous courses / wex				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • 				

8. My Educational Needs

A summative comment on progress towards outcomes:	
A summative comment on any changes to my special educational needs:	

9. My Health Needs

A summative comment on any changes to health needs as outlined in the Plan			
Health Care Professionals present for review?		Update and/or report included?	

10. My Social Care Needs

A summative comment on any changes to social care needs as outlined in the Plan			
Social Worker present for review?		Update and/or report included?	

11. Any other changes

A summative comment on any significant changes in circumstances, i.e. family situation, care status, service provision not related to health or social care			

12. Pathway Plan

This section **must** be completed for all learners.

What are my aspirations for when I leave college?	
What are my next steps towards achieving this?	
Intended destination for next academic year?	
Where do I see myself in five years' time? (<i>optional</i>)	
Have I received advice or guidance regarding next steps?	
How independent am I?	
What support / intervention do I need to help me progress towards further independence?	

13. My Outcomes

My outcomes	Has this outcome been achieved?	Progress towards unmet outcomes	New outcomes	Have short-term targets been agreed for next year?	Are changes to provision required?

14. Personal Budget

Do I have a personal budget?	
Is my personal budget managed by direct payments or a third party?	
If yes, has a financial audit been undertaken?	
If yes, date of audit:	

15. Recommendations

In line with the Local Authority's exit criteria and the Young Person's progress, does the EHCP need to:	
1. Be maintained	
2. Have a reduction of provision	
3. Have an increase of provision	
4. Be ceased	
Has the young person's SEND difficulties changed so significantly that another full statutory assessment should be considered?	

16. Amendments required

Amendments required to the Plan	Yes / No
Content: Amendments are required to the content of the EHCP (sections A to E).	
Provision: Request for a change in provision (section F). If yes, please attach a separate report including specific details and supporting evidence.	
Placement: Request for a change of placement (section I). If yes, please attach a separate report including specific details and supporting evidence. Please also include the young person's (or parent/carers') preference.	

17. Any differing recommendations

Does any person(s) attending this review not agree with the recommendations recorded?
If yes, please provide details.

18. Checklist

College views	
Learner's views	
Parent/Carers' views	
Health Care views	
Social Care views	
Reports from professionals involved	
Costed provision map	
Annotated EHCP with recommended changes	

19. Signatures

Young Person

Name (please print)	Signature	Date:

Parent/Carer

Name (please print)	Signature	Date:

Author / Lead Professional

Name (please print)	Signature	Job title	Date:

Head of Learning Support

Name (please print)	Signature	Date:

Appendix 11: Student feedback form

What is Important to me
My Aspirations and Goals
What do people like and admire about me
What helps me do the things that are important to me and that I want to achieve
What doesn't help me
What will help me prepare for when I leave college?

Appendix 12: Parent Feedback form

Please use this form to update us and tell us anything that you would like us to know prior to the review meeting.

Name of Student: _____

Our hopes and aspirations for our young person;

This may include how you would like to see your young person be part of his/her community, going to activities and clubs, making friends, being happy and successful at college, becoming more independent, progressing into training or employment

How we help and support our young person at home;

For example, building independence skills such as self-care, cooking, communication, travel, homework or behaviour

What progress do you feel your young person has made towards their educational needs this year? For example, have they become more independent?

Has there been any significant changes to your young person's health over the last 12 months
For example, has significant progress been made, has a new diagnosis been received, has a new area of difficulty been identified?

Has there been any significant changes to your young person's social care needs over the last 12 months

For example, has significant progress been made, has a new diagnosis been received, has a new area of difficulty been identified?

Are there any additional comments you would like to make?

Appendix 13: Interview schedules for learners, LSWs and LS co-ods

Interview Schedule: Learners

Research Question:

- 5) What are learners' (with EHCPs) perceptions and experiences of the annual review process?
e.g. how they were prepared for it? Were you asked who you might like to attend?

Interview Questions:

Preparation for the meeting:

- 1) When did you first hear about the Annual Review meeting?
- 2) Who told you about this meeting and how did they tell you?
- 3) Did anyone explain to you what the Annual Review meeting is for? Can you explain to me what it is for?
- 4) Do you think the Annual Review meeting is important?
- 5) Who decided where and when the meeting would happen? (Were you happy with the time and place? Is there a time or place you would have preferred?)
- 6) Who decided who would come to the meeting?
- 7) Were you ok with who came to the meeting?
- 8) Is there anyone else you would have liked to have at the meeting?
- 9) Is there anyone you would have preferred not to have at the meeting?
- 10) Did you do any activities to prepare for the meeting and if so, what were they? Were they helpful? Who did them with you?
- 11) Did you feel you knew what to expect? (this question may be omitted depending on the ability of the learner).
- 12) How did you feel before going to the meeting?

During the meeting:

- 13) How was the Annual Review meeting? Did you enjoy it? Not enjoy it? Why/why not?
- 14) Did you understand what was happening at the meeting?
- 15) Was the meeting what you expected?
- 16) How did you feel in the meeting?
- 17) Did you feel you were able to speak at the meeting? Why?
- 18) Did you feel listened to? (use scaling?)
- 19) If yes, how did you know you were being listened to? If no, what would have made this better?
- 20) Were there any questions you liked? Were there any questions you didn't like?
- 21) Did you feel your ideas were included in the meeting and the decisions made?
- 22) What decisions or outcomes were made in the meeting? Did you agree or disagree with the decisions?
- 23) Have you attended Annual Reviews before? If yes, how did this one compare? Was it similar/different/better/worse?

After the meeting:

- 24) How did you feel after the meeting?
- 25) Do you think anything will change as a consequence of this meeting? How will you know?

- 26) What did you like about the meeting?
- 27) What did you not like?
- 28) What do you think could be better?
- 29) Looking back, is there anything else you would have liked to have said or anything you would have liked to have done differently?
- 30) Do you think the meeting was helpful?
- 31) Do you think it will help you achieve what you would like to do in college and after college?

Interview Schedule: Learning support workers

Research Question:

- 2) How do learning support co-ordinators and learning support workers elicit and use the learners' voice to inform the Annual Review process?

Interview Questions:

Before the meeting:

- 1) What do you see as the purpose of the Annual Review?
- 2) What is your role in the Annual Review process?
Do you feel you should have a greater/lesser role in the process?
- 3) Are the learners prepared for the Annual Review meeting?
- 4) If yes, how are they prepared? Who does this with them? Are any specific activities carried out to help with this? Who do you think is the best person for this? Why?
- 5) Do the young people speak to you about their annual reviews?
- 6) Do the young people talk to you about their hopes and aspirations? Do they talk to you about their concerns? Do they discuss the support they receive with you? Do you pass on this information to anyone? Who? How?
- 7) If Person Centred tools or approaches are mentioned: What do you mean by Person Centred?
Do you use any specific tools?
- 8) What information is gathered to inform the annual review meeting?
- 9) What are the benefits of eliciting the learner's voice?
- 10) What are the challenges?

During the meeting:

- 11) Do you attend the meeting?
- 12) If yes, what is your role at the meeting?
- 13) If no, why is this? Do you think you should? Why?
- 14) If yes, what happens at the meeting?
- 15) How is the learner involved in the meeting?
- 16) What information is drawn upon to inform the decision making regarding the outcomes and actions?
- 17) How is the learner's voice included in the decision making and outcomes and actions?
- 18) Do you think the learners feel listened to?

After the meeting:

- 19) What happens after the meeting?
- 20) How do the decisions made in the meeting impact your work with the learner?
- 21) What feedback do you have after the meeting? How are you informed of any changes/decisions?
- 22) How can you access the information about the outcomes on their EHCPs/from the Annual Review?
- 23) What do you think works well?
- 24) What do you think could be better?

Interview Schedule – LS co-ordinators

Research Question:

- 3) How do learning support co-ordinators and learning support workers elicit and use the learners' voice to inform the Annual Review process?

Interview Questions:

Preparation for the meeting:

- 1) How would you describe the purpose of the Annual Review meeting?
- 2) What is your role in the Annual Review process?
- 3) Who sets up the Annual Review meetings? E.g. arranges the dates, times, locations?
- 4) Who decides who will be invited and how are they invited?
- 5) Do you involve the learners in the preparations for the meeting?
- 6) How is the learner prepared for the Annual Review meeting?
- 7) Do you do any tasks in advance of the meeting to elicit their thoughts and feelings with regards to the topics which will be discussed? How do you get their voices to inform the meeting?
- 8) If yes to no. 5, what information do you try to gather from the learner before the meeting?
- 9) Who does the preparatory work with the learner? How is this decided?
- 10) If 'Person Centred Tools or Approaches' are used, what do you mean by this? What does it look like?
- 11) What other preparation work is carried out? Who else might be involved in this?

During the meeting:

- 12) Do you attend the meeting? Why/why not?
- 13) If yes, what is your role at the meeting?
- 14) Who chairs the meeting? How is this decided?
- 15) How is the meeting structured?
- 16) How is the learner involved in the meeting?
- 17) What information is drawn upon to inform the discussions, outcomes and actions?
- 18) How is the learner's voice included in the decision making during the meeting?
- 19) Do you think the learners feel listened to? How do you know? How do you ensure that they are listened to?
- 20) What do you think works well in the meetings? (Generally and specifically in relation to the learner's voice).
- 21) What do you think could be better?
- 22) What are the benefits of including the voice of the learner in the Annual Review?
- 23) Are there any challenges to including the voice of the learner?

After the meeting:

- 24) Who completes the paperwork for the meeting?
- 25) How is it shared with the learners?
- 26) Who else is it shared with and how?
- 27) What happens as a result of the Annual Review?
- 28) What do you think is working well with the Annual Review process in the college?
- 29) What do you think could be better?

Appendix 14: Feedback to the college

The following includes the agenda and key findings which were presented to the college at the feedback meeting. A description of the discussion with the college in relation to each of the finding is included. Finally, the college's correspondence, and initial and final response is presented.

Meeting with College

Feedback on Illuminative Research into how the voice of the learners' is elicited and used to inform the Annual Review Process

Date: 20.6.19

Attendees: Pauline Cooper (Trainee Educational Psychologist and Researcher), XX (Education Support Manager), XX (learning support co-ordinator), XX (Educational Psychologist)

Agenda:

- 1) What is Illuminative Research?
- 2) Explanation of the stages for the approach and how the research was carried out
- 3) Strengths of the college and the AR process
- 4) Issues for consideration
- 5) Discussion

Research Questions of the study:

- 1) What are learners' (with EHCPs) perceptions and experiences of the annual review process?
- 2) How do learning support workers elicit and use the learners' voice to inform the Annual Review process?
- 3) How do learning support co-ordinators elicit and use the learners' voice to inform the Annual Review process?
- 4) How might the college develop its processes for eliciting and using learners' voices to inform the Annual Review process?

6. Explanation of my approach to the study: Illuminative Research

- Illuminative Research (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington, 1977) is an approach based on the following principles:
 - be "Applicable to situations as they exist"; with "no artificial arrangements (such as 'balanced control groups')"

- be “Reality-based” and should recognise the “complex and... atypical” and “review the curriculum...as it interacts with the its context”
- “lead to studies that are useful and interesting”

(Parlett, 1974, p. 14)

- It seeks to produce a “description and interpretation” as opposed to a “measurement and prediction” (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972). Illuminative Evaluation aims to inform decision making by raising an awareness and understanding of the successful processes, as well as the challenges of the innovation, and providing clarity regarding the procedures involved
- *Instructional system* = Using the learner’s voice to inform the AR process in a Post 16 setting
- *Learning Milieu* = College

7. Stages of Illuminative Research and how the research was carried out

- Stage 1: Setting up the investigation
 - Meeting with the college
 - Establishing key people (LS Co-od, LSWs, learners)
 - Agreeing what would be researched
 - Informed the planning of the research (interviews, observations, documentation)
- Stage 2: Open-ended exploration
 - Observations, college documentation
- Stage 3: Focused enquiries
 - Interviews
- Stage 4: Interpretation
 - Data analysis:
 - Thematic Analysis of interviews (Braun and Clarke, 2006)
 - Robson (2002) and Wolcott (1994): Description, Analysis, Interpretation
 - Robson (2002) for documentary analysis: Recording unit ‘learner’ and ‘learner’s voice’
- Stage 5: Reporting the study
 - Today’s meeting
 - Follow up report including main points from the discussion

8. Strengths of the college and AR process

- Staff commitment and passion to supporting the learner
“we kind of... advocate for them...they’re absolutely the whole point in why we’re all here” (LS Co-od)
- Learners felt the AR was important
- All learners reported positive experiences of the AR and reported feeling positive about the college in general
“...I do I love it here” (learner)

The college wondered whether this would be the case with learners in the wider college, especially those who do not agree with what is being suggested for them. This might be because they do not agree with what is suggested for what they need in order to support their goals and aspirations, or it can be because they want to stay at the college and they are being informed that this is no longer possible or appropriate.

Due to the lack of support following post 16 provision, the college can become a ‘revolving door’, in which learners enrol on course after course so that they can stay. This can result in them becoming institutionalised. Additional, it can lead to difficult conversations with the YP and parents with regards to the appropriateness of their continued enrolment at the college. If they are not able to access courses which help them to progress to a Level 2 or 3, it can be difficult to justify the reasons for them to continue working on Level 1 courses, as these do not provide the necessary level of qualifications for employment (NB: Level 1 course focus on life skills and teaches the learner how to be in college/access an educational setting).

- Learners reported positive relationships with the staff, identified people they could talk to and felt supported by the staff
“that’s changed I think it’s cause like the teachers this year is like they understand me a bit more” (learner; when discussing the changes in her behaviour)

“cause like obviously like my tutor and the learning support person we have like a bond and we connected straight away...so then like I know o I can tell these people stuff” (learner)
- The learners felt listened to in the meetings
“felt like I could say everything I wanted to” (learner)

- Analysis of the observations showed the majority of the interactions occurred between the Chairperson and the learner (most patterns observed were A: Chairperson asks learner a question – B: Learner responds to the question)

The college was pleased with this outcome because it is something they have strived to ensure when training staff working in the AR process.

9. Issues for consideration

- Learners' anxieties
 - Preparation: Completion of feedback form and who with; explicit discussions regarding who to invite/who is coming to the meeting; greater information and preparation about what questions will be asked and what others will be asked; agreeing what information will or won't be shared in the meeting
 - Perceptions of the AR: What is the purpose; perceptions of needing to be judged as 'good' – may be linked with perceptions of autonomy and role in the meeting

The college discussed how many of the learners in the wider college disassociate themselves from the EHCP and from being the 'type of person' who needs that support. For some learners, they feel that it is 'not cool' to have an EHCP.

The learners' previous experiences of the EHCP, AR meetings the support they have received in school can create an 'overhang' and influence their perceptions of the process when they attend college. For example, if they have been segregated from their peers in order to access a resource unit or intervention programmes, they may not want to continue to have this experience at college which can lead to them resisting the EHCP and its associations with SEND support.

In light of the discussion, the college reflected that they cannot assume that the learners' perceptions of the AR are in line with how the college would like them to perceive and experience the process. Further to this, they identified that if they have not been used to being part of the AR meetings, suddenly being part of them and having everyone's attention on them may be an unfamiliar and daunting situation for them.

The importance of knowing the learner and having a relationship with them was raised and discussed further in relation to managing learners' anxieties and perceptions of the AR. The college suggested that in an ideal world, they would like to have two meetings for the AR: one in which they could focus on the learner and their aspirations, which could be run by any member of staff the learner had a good relationship with, and one in which the funding needs of the learner could be addressed.

- Role of the parents: positives include – providing reassurance; being able to share progress and college life with their parents; being able to show how ‘adult’ they are. Negatives – can impact a learner’s ability to share what they are really thinking; can be a source of anxiety/embarrassment/uncomfortableness

The College was surprised that the learners reported positives about the parents attending as it had been their experience that for some of the learners, they liked to keep college and home life separate.

The College reflected that managing the parents’ anxieties is a challenge for them. Part of the issue is that once the YP leaves education, there appears to be no further support. Support would come from social care but there is very little funding within social care and so often there is nothing for YP following their post 16 provision. The college reported that one parent commented it felt like she is “standing on the edge of a cliff”.

A ‘Transitions Team’ has been created in one of the LA that feeds into the college. When a YP is coming towards the end of their post 16 provision, they aim to attend the learner’s final AR; will carry out an assessment at the home regarding the person’s independence and life skills; and will give advice on whether a Care Act is needed (i.e. support from Social Care). The care act is not funded in the same way as an EHCP and in most cases, does not result in any additional funding or support being provided.

The fact that the EHCP and legislation is for CYP from ‘0 – 25’, parents have the perception that the support will continue until they reach 25 years of age. In most cases, it is not made clear that the EHCP will only continue while the YP is in education and while everyone deems it to be necessary, including the YP themselves. This is another reason for parents’ anxieties around the continuation of the EHCP, especially if they had to fight to get the plan for their child in the first place.

- Learners awareness of their rights and their role in the AR
 - Differing levels of awareness (due to being cocooned; not being asked; not being around more able learners who are aware of their rights)
 - Learners feeling unsure whether they can speak up regarding some issues, have a choice of which questions are asked of them or others

The College discussed how this could potentially be addressed through tutorials and whole class teaching on YPs rights and citizenship. This could include sessions on voting and having their voice heard for a range of reasons. With regards to the AR process, this could be

addressed through focused sessions with groups of learners with EHCPs, in which the purpose of the AR and their autonomy and role could be explained and discussed with them.

- Use of the EHCP in college and ongoing impact of the AR
 - All the learners felt the AR was important but only one was able to identify how it had any impact following the meeting (i.e. she had applied for a college course). LSWs also did not report any specific impact
 - Two learners discussed how their teachers did not know about the information of the EHCP; did not know how the information is shared with or used by the staff
 - Staff discussed examples of EHCP targets being embedded into the learners SMART targets so that they are used all the time, learners are more familiar with them, see the benefit of them and the AR meeting

The learners do not always know what their SMART targets are. Often at the ARs, everyone switches off when discussing the outcomes. The Pathway Plan section often generates the most discussions although the College identified that the 'five years' question is difficult.

- Role of the LSWs
 - Potentially have more explicit/main role in the AR
 - Potentially provide more support in the preparation stages

The College explained how releasing LSWs for the AR meetings is logistically very challenging. This is because the model that the college uses for the support is for the LSWs to provide support to a range of learners in lessons as opposed to being fixed to one particular learner. Therefore, if they were to be released for the meeting, they would be removing support from other learners and it is likely to be impossible to find cover for this.

The College explained that the role of the LSW in the college is to focus on academic support and pastoral support is provided more by the tutors and Well-Being Mentors.

- Person-centred planning
 - Ethos is strong, staff are committed – could this be more coherent and consistent? Agreed definition? E.g. in documentation; agreed approach of the staff; shared with the parents?

The college reported that they have been working on the staff's understanding of various processes, such as the meanings of various terms used within the college (i.e. SEND, EHCP). This is an area they have recognised as needing further work.

They explained that the qualifications which staff working in a college are required to have mean that many of them have not had formal training or input regarding SEND and the related processes. LSWs do not need to have had previous experience in education and the teachers do not need to have formal teaching qualifications such as a PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate in Education). Many of the staff have worked at the college for a long time and therefore have outdated perceptions and knowledge of supporting SEND. Some teachers continue to think that SEND is managed and dealt with separately by the pastoral and SEND department, as opposed to understanding that they need to be supporting it through their teaching and interactions with the learners. The college identified that this is an area of improvement which they are working on.

- LA processes (relevance/updating of EHCPs; not meeting deadlines; wording; paperwork variations)
 - To be discussed with the local authorities

The College explained that due to LA processes in which the funding is agreed to on a yearly basis following the AR, they face challenges when setting outcomes and actions to support learners with achieving their goals and aspirations. At the start of the learners time at the college, if they knew that the learner was definitely going to have their EHCP and be with the college for the next three years, they could base the outcomes and actions on this long term plan and put the necessary actions in place to support this. However, the plan and any associated funding is agreed on a yearly basis following the AR meeting. This places a ceiling limit on the conversations the college can have with the learner during the meeting about the type of support they are able to provide, and also affects the type of outcomes that can be set and worked towards, as the college does not want to raise false hopes. The college feels they are only able to consider provisions which are available within the college's own budget, as they cannot rely on the additional funding being provided via the EHCP and LA.

The College also explained the ethical dilemmas they face when reviewing outcomes. If they review the outcomes too positively, demonstrating that the learner has met them all, then they run the risk of the LA saying that they are going to cease the plan instead of agreeing to make amendments and change all the outcomes. This results in the college recording some outcomes as not fully met in order to present a reason for continuing the plan.

10. Discussion

(Following our meeting, if you are willing to send an email in response to this study, it would be gratefully received)

The College reflected on the lack of input in the AR from other services. In some cases, the learner can be progressing well at college and no longer have any additional needs or reasons for additional support with their education. However, their independence at home is still limited and what is needed is support from health or social care. Unfortunately, gaining their input and support is a challenge. In most cases where their support has been given, it has been as a result of them attending the meetings, having face to face discussions, and learning first-hand how and why they need to provide a role in supporting that YP. Their attendance is therefore highly beneficial and necessary for ensuring the YP receives the support they need.

The information on the EHCPs was also discussed, including the fact that in many cases, the content has been lifted from the EP's reports, and rarely includes input from health and social care. This undermines its purpose of being an Educational, 'Health and Social Care' Plan.

11. Actions

The college identified the following three actions as areas they would like to focus on as a result of the findings of the study:

- 1) Adjust the learner Feedback form to include a 'Free Text' box in which the learners can include any additional topics or issues they would like to address via the AR process, which are not addressed by the other sections of the form and AR paperwork.*
- 2) Create a 'Your guide to your review' in order to provide learners with more information about the purpose of the AR and their role in the process.*
- 3) Give greater consideration to decision regarding who chairs the meetings e.g. consider members of staff who have a good relationship with the learner and ask the learner would they would prefer to chair it.*

NB: Further to the last action point, the college explained that they are in the process of setting up 'Lead Professional' training for the LSWs, which could include a focus on their role in the AR process. However, if there were concerns or issues regarding funding, the meetings would still need to be chaired by an LS Co-od as other staff members would not know or be able to discuss the necessary information for such circumstances.

Initial feedback from the college following the meeting:

Thank you for taking the time to go through your results with us this week. I have to say it was very illuminating and we will be looking at your recommendations at our cross campus process meeting in July.

Initial thoughts from the feedback.

- amending our forms to include free text to give students the opportunity to state their preferences on the meeting agenda
- Students to be asked in the first term who they want at their review
- Discussion of a guide to the AR process for learners

Both xx and I enjoyed the wider discussion that came out of your research around the purpose of the reviews and the different perception of the purpose of the process between the chair, local authority and students etc.

I will send you an update after we bring the discussion points to the team meeting.

Kind Regards,

Education Support Manager (SEN)

Final feedback from the college following the Cross Campus meeting:

- invite LSWs to apply for a new post of 'lead practitioner' allowing certain key LSWs to be more involved with the learner journey to undertake initial on programme reviews and build a greater relationship with student. This will (hopefully) allow the lead practitioner to attend the reviews
- A new letter to be sent out with the review invites which breaks down the purpose of the review in an easy format

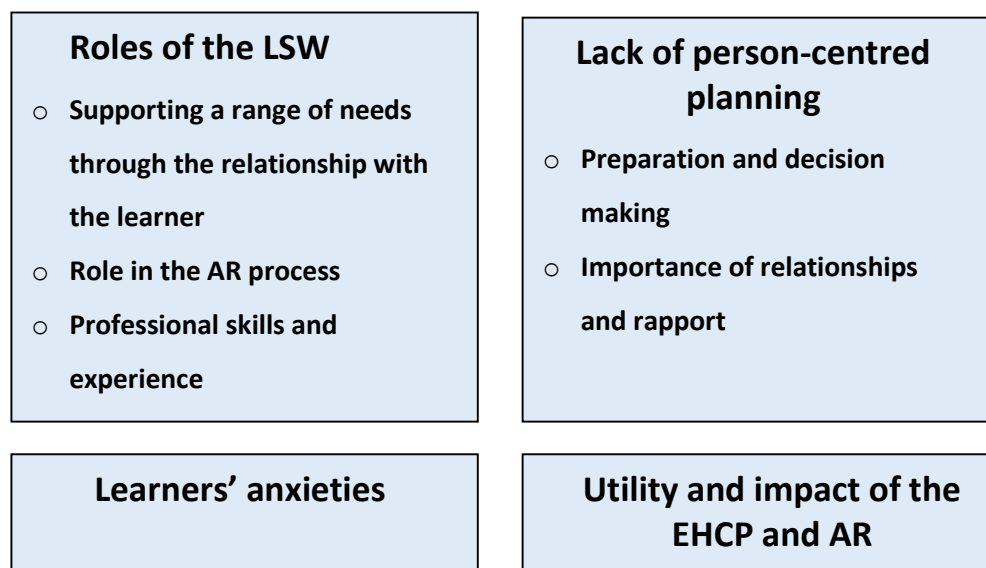
Other points that are indirectly related

- We will be starting a SEND surgery to increase the confidence in staff to support learners with SEND
- We will be running EHCP workshops to teach staff about the review/EHCP process so they have a better understanding of their role in the review
- EHCP outcomes will be uploaded to our staff systems with a view that tutors assess progress made against them at regular intervals throughout the year with the learner (not just at review time)

Appendix 15: Detailed presentation of LSW themes

LSW 1: Jane's LSW

Four main themes were found in LSW1's interview, with three subthemes within the first two main themes:



Roles of the LSW

- **Supporting a range of needs through the relationship with the learner**

LSW 1 explained that she works with learners with special educational needs (SEN) and supports not only their academic needs but also their social, emotional and mental health needs. She bases her support on her experience of the individual learner and the rapport and relationship she has with them, rather than any formal documentation or education plans.

LSW1: it's building that rapport and getting that trust...so that you can find a way in to help them (94 – 95)

LSW1's relationship with the learners is different to one they have with the tutors, as it is more informal. This contributes to a balanced, all round support system.

LSW1:...it's almost like bad cop good cop (337)

- **Role in the AR process**

LSW1's role in the AR process was to complete the staff feedback form with the tutor. Beyond this, there was no requirement for her involvement. She was informed of the meeting but not specifically

invited. LSW1 chose to attend because she has so much knowledge and insight of Jane's needs and would like to discuss her support directly with Jane, but did not think the college recognised the significance of her relationship with Jane or benefit of her attendance.

LSW1: I'm with these students all the time and you...clearly think it's just important the tutor goes (304 - 305)

- **Professional skills and experience**

LSW1 explained that she had not known what her role in the AR process was and would have liked more training and guidance on it. In general, her work is guided by her previous training and experiences. Having training would help her to know she was doing the right thing, give her more confidence and make her feel her role is important.

LSW1: giving me some information running up to it and making me feel like...it is important that you are part of this meeting (620 – 621)

Lack of person-centred planning

- **Preparation and decision-making**

LSW1 was able to describe Person-Centred Planning but knew of this from her previous role as a support worker. She had not heard the term used in the college and did not feel that Jane's AR had been person-centred because Jane's feelings and perspectives had not been considered enough in the preparation stages. LSW1 felt that Jane should have been consulted at the very start of the year and included in the meetings with LSW1 and the tutor when reviewing her EHCP for the feedback form.

- **Importance of relationships and rapport**

LSW1 felt that the process should be led by people who know Jane and who she feels comfortable with for it to be more person-centred. This would help personalise the process and enable Jane to open up more.

LSW1: ...she doesn't have a rapport with them downstairs...she says that she doesn't want keep...repeating stuff (219 – 221)

Learners' anxieties

LSW1 explained that in the lead up to the AR, Jane appeared to be in a low mood. This was possibly due to anxieties and a general apathy regarding the meeting, and she hypothesised that Jane would like to be left alone to get on with her life and being an 'adult'.

LSW1: ...I kind of got the feeling she's like I'm done with all that now just let me be an adult (192 – 193)

Utility and impact of the EHCP and AR

LSW1 discussed several barriers to the effective use of the EHCPs and which undermine the impact of the ARs. Locating and accessing a learner's EHCP was difficult and she has found that support plans are often given more as an afterthought.

LSW1: ...a few months or weeks down the line it's like o yea here's the statement do you want a read (115 – 116)

LSW1 also described how EHCPs are often out of date and do not reflect their needs, which also minimises how useful they are. LSW1 felt that the EHCP's should be updated with the learner so that they had more control and ownership of the documents and AR process.

LSW1 reported that nothing had changed after the meeting and she had not been given any of the paperwork.

LSW 2: E's LSW

Three main themes were found in LSW2's interview, with three subthemes within the first main theme:

Roles of the LSW

- Gathering, recording and sharing the learner's voice
- Emotional support
- Authority and hierarchy of roles

Individual preferences and giving learners choice

Utility of the EHCP and impact of the AR

Roles of the LSW

- **Gathering, recording and sharing learner's voice**

LSW2 described her role in the AR as gathering the learner's voice and communicating information to the relevant members of staff. The learner's voice is gathered either using the learner feedback form or by recording any information that is shared during day to day conversations. Information is recorded using a record book, the college's communication and monitoring system (Pro-monitor) or speaking face to face. She is more likely to help learners complete their feedback forms if she has had a particularly good relationship with them.

LSW2: sometimes they talk to us better than they would a tutor...we put them at their ease (54 – 56)

LSW2 had been invited to the ARs for a couple of the learners she has worked with but had not been able to attend because the meetings were not on days that she worked. LSW2 commented that she would like to have more involvement because she has worked with some of them so much.

- **Emotional support**

LSW2 described how she provides emotional support as well as academic support. She described how E is an open book and so LSW2 knows when she is upset and sometimes has to help calm her down.

LSW2:...but she does get very anxious...very easily anxious...and...it'll grind in her you know and...I'll have to say now calm down (365 – 369)

- **Authority and hierarchy of roles**

Throughout the interview, the position of LSW2's role became apparent. Although it was important for her to pass on information, it seemed her involvement in the AR was not considered necessary and information was not consistently shared with her. Her hierarchy was demonstrated in her use of the term "higher grounds":

LSW2: ...I say I have to tell the tutor ... so the tutor's involved and then it will go on higher... you know to the higher grounds as I would say (443 – 447)

Individual preferences and giving learners choices

LSW2 talked about the importance of giving learners' choices as they all have different preferences. For example, it is important to check how and where the learner would prefer to complete the Learner Feedback form, although most prefer a one to one situation.

LSW2:...they seem a bit more happier when it's one to one or something you know they don't like it in a group xx (*learner*) doesn't like groups very much so she would like a one to one (124 – 126)

Utility of the EHCP and impact of the AR

LSW2 reported that the ARs do not have any particular bearing on the support she gives.

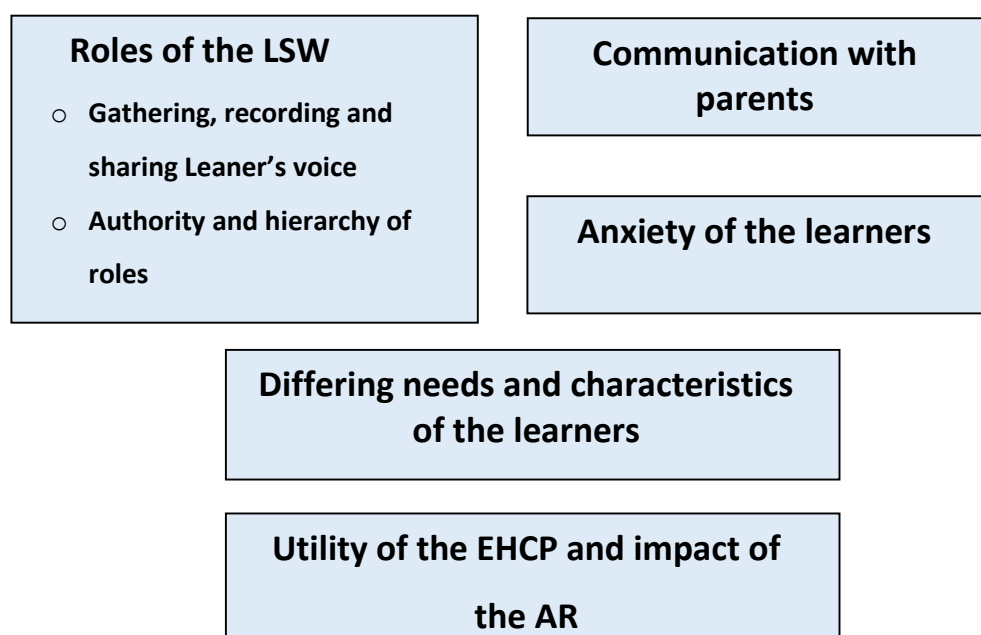
Interviewer: ...do you see a direct impact in how you work with the learner as a result of the annual reviews

LSW2: ...not with the ones I work with no (388 – 390)

LSW2 does not receive any of the paperwork and if she does need to be given any information, this is generally because something significant has happened. If she wants to know more, LSW2 explained that she can access the paperwork and information on the computer.

LSW 3: Zac's LSW

Five main themes were found in the interview with LSW3, with two additional subthemes:



Roles of the LSW

○ Role in the AR

LSW3 did not attend the ARs but was sometimes asked for her feedback on a learner's progress via the staff feedback form. She does not carry out any preparation work with the learners for the AR and is not aware if any specific preparation tasks.

LSW3: ...you may get a tutor ask you what do you think you know have you noticed anything...but no not normally I've not been involved in any other way (54 – 55)

LSW3 acknowledged that the learners are more relaxed with the LSWs and tend to open up more which could be beneficial when gathering their views for the AR.

○ Authority and hierarchy of roles

Perceptions of authority and hierarchy appeared to influence the expectations for the role of the LSW. For example, LSWs were not expected to attend ARs because:

LSW3:...you are a learning support worker...you're not the same...you don't need to be there it's for the teachers to deal with (264 – 265)

Communication with parents

LSW3 would have liked greater communication with parents, both for the AR process and throughout the year. She explained that she spends so much time with the learners and communicates a lot with the parents via email but never actually meets them. LSW3 felt that having greater communication could provide an additional "port of call" for the parents' concerns or questions.

Anxiety of the learners

LSW3 described how Zac can often be anxious when talking with the tutors and this can inhibit her ability to speak. LSW3 offered that this may be because Zac is worried she has done something wrong.

LSW3: she does get nervous and then...she forgets to say things...even if...there's nothing wrong she gets nervous (153 – 156)

LSW3 also explained that the AR meetings can be daunting for the learners, and reflected that having an LSW at the meeting could help to reassure them.

LSW3: ...it's always that (*in-take of breath*) what have I done wrong...because they work with you a lot you know their little ways and you can start to put 'em at ease (237 – 240)

Differing needs and characteristics of the learners

LSW3 distinguished between learners who are “happy” and “confident” and those who are “naughty” and have behaviour difficulties as a determining factor in how much a learner feels listened to. She explained that if a learner is not generally having a good time in college they may struggle as they may not agree with what is said.

LSW3: ...if things aren't going their way you know...they may be told off or told to go outside for five minutes just to chill out and stop the attitude so in their review they may not agree with what the tutor's saying (320 – 322)

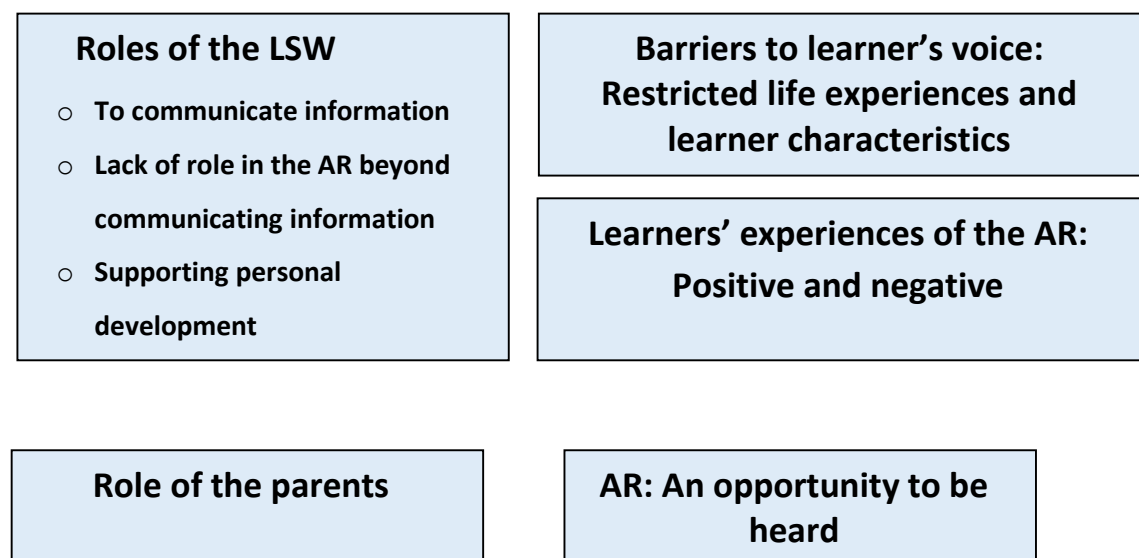
Utility of the EHCP and impact of the AR

LSW3 reported that she refers to the EHCPs throughout the year but had not looked at them when completing any of the Staff feedback forms for the ARs. Paperwork from the ARs is not shared with her and she is not informed of any outcomes of the meeting unless it directly affects her day to day work.

LSW3:...it's not always passed back to us we don't always know what's been implemented...(340)

LSW4: Pink's LSW

LSW4's interview had five main themes, with three subthemes within the first theme:



Roles of the LSW

- **To communicate information**

LSW4's role in the AR process was to communicate any relevant information about the learners to the tutors or Heads of Departments. Her views on a learner's progress is given via the staff feedback form. Information gathered through her day to day interactions with the learners is shared primarily through verbal discussions, as well as written notes and the use of Pro-monitor (the college's database and communication system).

- **Lack of role in the AR beyond communicating information**

LSW4 did not have any other role in the AR process, is not given any feedback from the meeting and did not perceive as necessary to have more involvement.

LSW4: ...because they've already asked me for my input and I've given it and it's between usually the tutor head of department parents and the student (222 – 223).

LSW4 felt that generally the learners are well supported in the meetings but acknowledged that it might be helpful for LSWs to attend ARs as well due to their relationships with the learners

Supporting personal development

LSW4 talked about the ways the SEND department supported the development of the learners' life skills and experiences and also their sense of self and confidence. This is achieved through the courses and opportunities provided at the college, the diverse range of needs and abilities of the other learners, and through the welcoming atmosphere which helps the learners feel valued.

LSW4: ...we do try and bring them out of their shell...within three years it's a different person (182 – 184)

Barriers to learners voice: Restricted life experiences

LSW4 described how accessing some learners' views can be challenging because they do not know what they want to do. She felt that this was often because they had not had the same life experiences as other young people or had not had the opportunities to express their opinions.

LSW4: ...sometimes we ask them what they do on a weekend what they've done and some students don't do anything...if they were doing more it might help them...a lot of them are cocooned (76 – 81)

Learners' experiences of the AR: Positive and negative

LSW4 described the different learners' experiences of the ARs and described one learner's experience as being positive because he had reached his targets and the college staff and his parents were pleased with his progress.

LSW4: ...some of them are really looking forward to their reviews and they if they've done well they're chuffed (130 – 131)

Others learners did not seem as bothered about their reviews.

LSW4: ...depends on the student...some don't care you know they're all different (142 – 143)

Role of the parents

LSW4 explained that the AR can be a good opportunity to engage parents in their young person's education, particularly if they have not been interested before.

LSW4: ...the parents as a rule want to know what's going on some listen more than others...I think it's time for them to be listened to and for the parents...not taking a lot of interest to be informed of what they're doing (150 – 154)

ARs can also help to realign parental expectations of the learner, either to raise them or make them more realistic.

LSW4: I think it opens eyes...(163)

ARs: An opportunity to be heard

Finally, LSW4 felt it was imperative that the learners' have their voices heard and included in the AR process because ultimately "it's about them" (line 146). LSW4 suggested that the presence of the tutor can support the learner in being able to voice their opinions, as the tutor can act as an advocate for their views.

LSW4: ...I do think it's a chance for the student to be listened to...they can speak because they've got a tutor there...and a parent...they can speak to both of them and they can actually feel free to give their opinion (170 – 174)

Overview of findings

Overview of findings for Research Question 2:

How do learning support workers elicit and use the learner's voice to inform the Annual Review process?

Role in the AR process

Three of the LSWs provided information about the learners' progress and development using the Staff feedback form. There is no expectation for the LSWs to attend the AR meetings. One LSW had been invited to the ARs for the learners she had worked with a lot but had not been able to attend. Only one LSW had attended an AR as a result of her own initiative. Three of the LSWs felt it might be beneficial to have more involvement, either with preparing the learners and/or supporting them in the meeting.

Preparing the learner for the AR

There was a range of opinions and experiences regarding the preparation of the learners for the AR. LSW1 felt that preparation work should be carried out by someone who knows the learner well and the learner should have more involvement. LSW2 had helped learners to complete their feedback forms and stressed the importance of giving learners a choice in how this is done. LSW3 and 4 said that the tutors met with the learners throughout the year about their progress but did not know of any specific preparation for the ARs.

Relationship with the learners

All four LSWs described how their relationships with the learners is different to the relationship learners have with other members of staff. Their relationship is often more informal and they provide emotional and pastoral support as well as academic guidance. As a result, the learners tend to be more open and honest with them. Due to this relationship, they felt their role in the preparation stages and their attendance at the meetings could be beneficial.

Anxieties of the learners

LSW1 and 2 described how the learners they support have been anxious about their ARs. This was due to them not know what was going to happen and because there would be lots of people there. LSW2's perceptions were that E was unlikely to be anxious about ARs because she had been to so many before. Positive experiences of the AR, as discussed by LSW3 and 4, were associated with the learners receiving positive feedback and meeting expectations and targets.

Authority and hierarchy

The theme of authority and the hierarchy of the LSW role occurred throughout all four of the interviews, either explicitly or implicitly. The LSWs talked about the importance of them sharing

information but it was not always seen by others as necessary to seek the LSW's input (3 out of 4 interviews), and information about the ARs was only shared with the all four LSWs on a 'need to know' basis. Reasons for this included not being seen as important enough or being seen differently to the teachers.

Use of the EHCP and impact of the AR

LSW1 did not know how to access the EHCPs, based her support on her skills and experience, and described how EHCPs are often unhelpful because they are out of date. LSW2 knew how to access the EHCPs but also based her support on her skills and experiences of the learners. LSW3 referred to the EHCP throughout the year but did not refer to it when completing the Staff Feedback forms. ARs meetings did not have a consistent impact on the LSWs' support.

Role of the parents

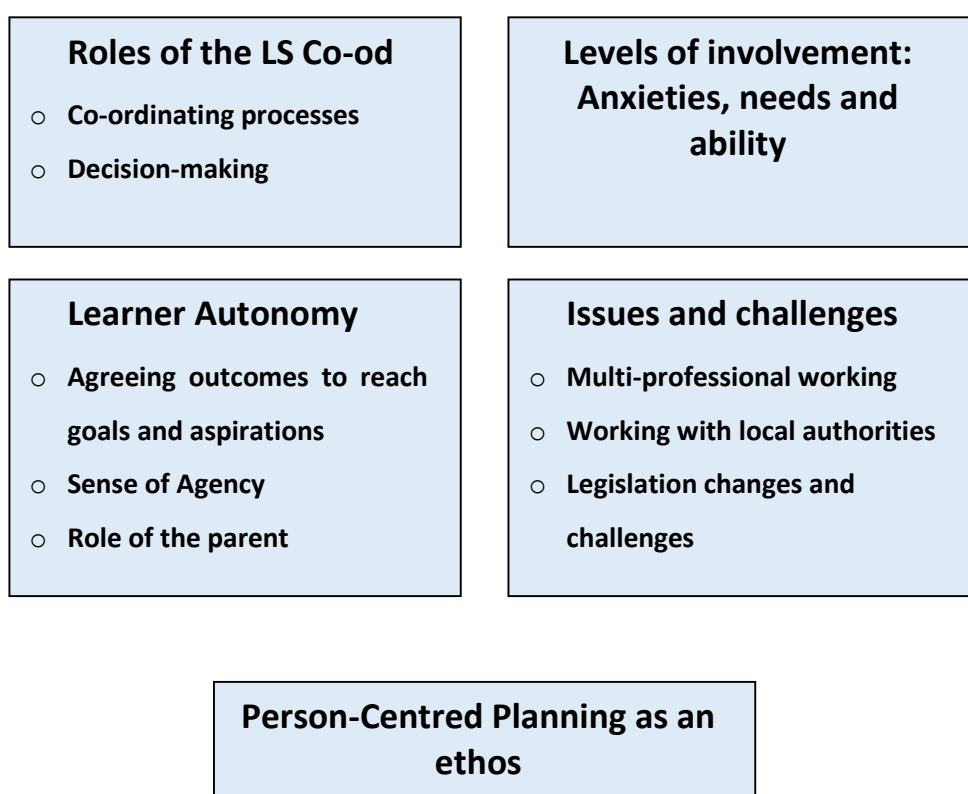
Two of the LSWs talked about the role and impact of the parents. LSW3 wanted more communication and joint working between her and the parents. LSW4 described how AR's can be opportunities to engage parents in their young person's education, and help realign their expectation and perceptions of their young person.

Appendix 16: Detailed presentation of LS Co-ods themes

Findings from the LS Co-ods

LS Co-od 1:

Five main themes were found in LS Co-od1's interview. Two subthemes were found within the first main theme, three subthemes in the third theme, and three subthemes were found in the fourth theme:



Roles of the LS Co-od:

- **Co-ordinating processes**

One of the roles of the LS Co-od is to co-ordinate the AR process. This included:

- administering the feedback forms (for learners, parents/carers and tutors/staff)
- gathering information from other agencies and professionals
- inviting parents/carers, relevant college staff, other professionals and agencies, and the learners to the meeting
- collating the information and preparing the paperwork in advance of the meeting
- chairing the AR

- supporting and leading the formulation of outcomes
- completing the AR paperwork after the meeting
- sending the paperwork to the LA, in liaison with the administration department
- ensuring any actions agreed at the meeting are shared and actioned

The LS Co-od also checked in with the tutors at other times of the year to check the progress of the learners.

When chairing the meeting, the LS Co-od checked that the information provided on the Student Feedback form is still relevant.

- **Decision-making**

The LS Co-od led or was involved in much of the decision making for the AR. Attendees were decided by referring to the list of attendees on the previous AR paperwork or names listed on any paperwork as having involvement. The LS Co-od also used her knowledge of the learner and professional judgement. Parents may also be consulted. learners could request people to attend, although it was not clear if the learners are explicitly asked.

LS Co-od1 explained that time and availability of staffing determined who would support the learner in completing the Student Feedback form.

LS Co-od1: It's a variety but yea generally speaking it's their personal tutor because they have the time to do the tutorials that they have each week...like on a one to one basis...but sometimes it can be a support worker might take them aside...it depends on staffing really (122 – 124)

Levels of involvement: Anxieties, needs and ability

LS Co-od1 explained that the amount learners are involved in the AR meetings varied from not attending at all to co-chairing or even chairing their own meetings. This depended on their ability and how comfortable they felt. learners who co-chaired the meetings were generally more-able. Learners who do not want to attend the meeting are met with separately in an environment in which they feel more relaxed, and the actions from the meeting are shared with them and their agreement is checked.

Having a relationship with the learner was described as being helpful when supporting them to feel more comfortable and able to be speak up in the meetings.

Learner autonomy

○ Supporting goals and aspirations

LS Co-od1 explained that the outcomes of the AR meeting are always informed by the goals and aspirations of the learner. This is supported through a process of listening to the suggestions of the learner and the LS Co-od and others at the meeting suggesting ideas for how they can be achieved.

LS Co-od1: it might be that they make a suggestion then we say how we would get to...that point (308 – 309)

LS Co-od1 described how the expectations of learners sometimes need to be managed. Their ideas may not be achievable due to their ability or the support available. LS Co-od1 explained that such limits on learners' goals and aspirations can cause frustration and upset.

○ Sense of agency

The learners' sense of agency and awareness of their rights in terms of decision-making was often determined by the severity of their needs and difficulties and the educational environments they had experienced. Those who had accessed mainstream settings alongside learners with a greater variety of needs and ability were more likely to express their views and opinions and were generally more aware of their changing rights at 18. LS Co-od1 explained it can be challenging working with learners who are more aware of their rights as there can be differing opinions regarding what is best for them.

LS Co-od1: in their head it's I'm 18 now I am making these decisions so sometimes that can be quite tricky trying to work with them... (437 – 438)

Learners who are less able and have needed a higher level of support are generally less aware of their changing rights at the age of 18.

LS Co-od1:...students that...have come from specialist schools...they've probably been at specialist school from the age of two until 16 so they...have been in a really supportive environment...it probably...won't feel any different to them (426 – 429)

○ Role of the parent

LS Co-od1 discussed that for a lot of learners, their parents continue to support them and be involved in the decision-making regarding their support and AR outcomes after they have turned 18. However, the learner's decision will always take priority.

LS Co-od1:...it's ultimately their decision...it's the student's right (415 – 416)

Issues and challenges

- **Multi-professional working**

LS Co-od1 explained that even though EHCPs include Health and Social Care input, it was always the education provider who takes responsibility for co-ordinating and carrying out the AR. Professionals and external agencies involved with the learners are always invited to the AR but do not always attend.

- **Working with local authorities**

LS Co-od1 described how the college had to create its own set of paperwork because each LA used a different format. Across the campuses, there were up to 5 or 6 LAs which fed into the college, making it difficult to streamline the process. LS Co-od1 felt that the college's paperwork is better because it flows and is more user friendly.

- **Legislation changes and challenges**

LS Co-od1 talked about the impact the changes to legislation had on the college in terms of processes and being ready to implement them, such as the new requirement to review the plans annually. LS Co-od1 explained how the changes were especially difficult for the college due to the vast number of learners with EHCPs compared with the numbers a mainstream secondary school would have to manage.

LS Co-od1: a mainstream school here they could have like 5...year 11s with reviews whereas our same year here would have a hundred (498 – 500)

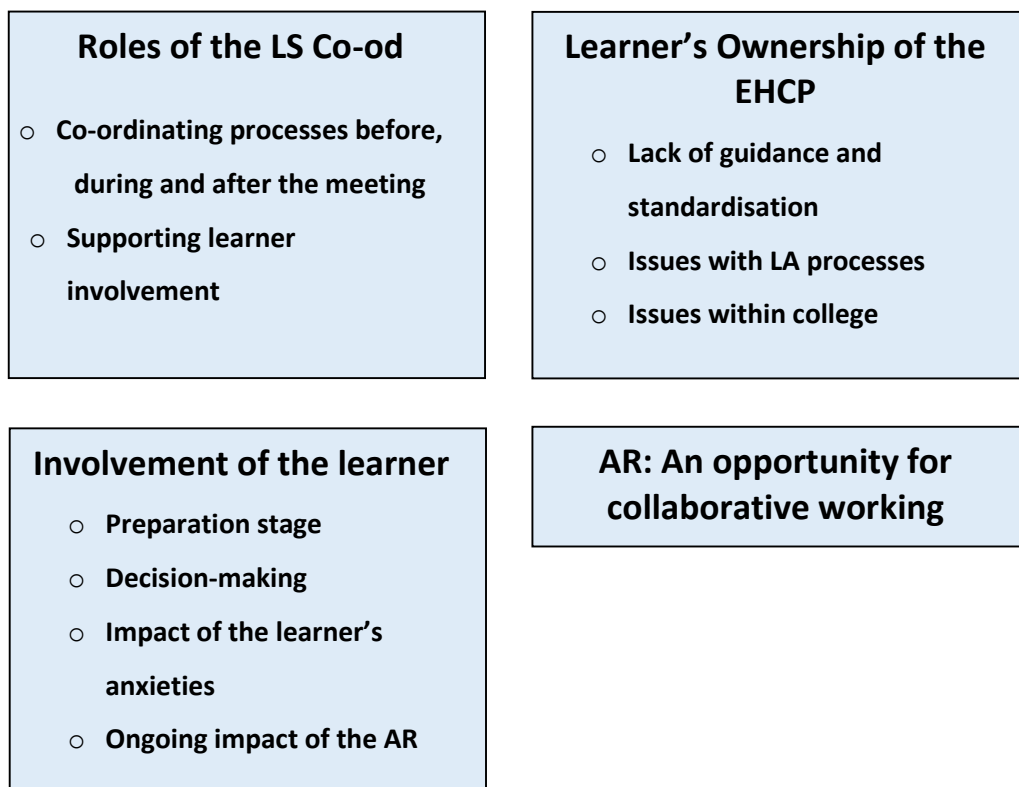
Person-Centred Planning as an ethos

LS Co-od1 knew of the term 'Person-Centred Planning' and said that it might be used in some of the college documentation but there was not an agreed definition or any specific approaches or tools used by the college. Instead, it was more of an 'ethos' behind the practices of the college staff.

LS Co-od1: ...I think that those words are probably used in some paperwork but that is definitely the ethos at college especially within the prep department I mean I know that some of my students struggle to use their voice...so we kind of...advocate for them (170 – 174)

LS Co-od 2:

Four main themes were found within LS Co-od2's interview, with several subthemes found within the first three main themes:



Roles of the learning support co-ordinator

- Co-ordinating processes before, during and after the meeting

The role of the LS Co-od included:

- administering the feedback forms;
- collating information and preparing the AR paperwork;
- ensuring the relevant attendees are invited;
- chairing the meeting;
- typing up the paperwork afterwards and sending the paperwork to the LA;
- ensuring action points are carried out.

Attendees are decided upon using a list of names of people previously involved, LS Co-od2's knowledge of anyone who had worked with the learner and suggestions given by the tutors, parents/carers or the learners. LS Co-od2 explained that as the chair of the meeting, he needed to ensure there was a "level playing" field so that everyone was treated and listened to equally.

- **Supporting learner involvement**

LS Co-od2 talked about supporting the learner to be involved in the meetings. This was achieved by explaining everything clearly and by making sure they were included in conversations. LS co-od2 explained that there possibly needed to be more work done to ensure everyone respects the learner in the meetings.

LS Co-od2:...you have lots of people talking about a student...rather than...involving the student as part of the...meetings (124 – 126)

Learner's ownership of the EHCP

LS Co-od2 talked about several factors which created a disconnect between the learners' and their ownership of their EHCPs.

- **Lack of guidance and standardisation**

LS Co-od2 felt that the changes in legislation had created some improvements but the lack of guidance for the paperwork and how EHCPs should be written had created inconsistencies across LAs and colleges. As a result of the lack of guidance, each LA and college had created their own paperwork which meant when a learner moved or started at a new college, the setting had to either adapt to the format or change it. Lack of guidance regarding whether the EHCP should be written in first or third person, also impacted the learner's ownership of the EHCP.

- **Issues with LA processes**

LS Co-od2 explained that most of the time, LAs did not make changes to the EHCPs following the ARs, which quickly made them out of date, irrelevant and less representative of the learner.

LS Co-od2 also explained that often the LAs did not return the AR paperwork to the families and colleges within the deadline. In some instances, parents/carers were not informed of the decisions for amendments, provision or funding. Such delays and issues caused confusion for the parents and has had a detrimental impact on the support learners receive.

- **Issues within college**

LS Co-od2 described how the EHCPs are not referred to regularly with the learners and this created a "breakdown" in the plan being a purposeful document and being "owned" by the learner.

LS Co-od2:...there's a break down between...it being a live document that informs support for a student and it being owned by the student (75 – 78)

LS Co-od2 suggested that the outcomes should be incorporated in the SMART targets which the curriculum tutors use on a regular basis and referred to throughout the lessons. LS Co-od2 explained this system could be used with all the learners to create an integrated, inclusive approach, and would help increase the learner's understanding and engagement in the AR process.

Involvement of the learner:

- **Preparation stage**

LS Co-od2 reported that 'Person-Centred Planning' was not a phrase used by the college. 'Learner Input' is used for the AR process and refers to the preparation stages. LS Co-od2 explained that this part of the process is best carried out by somebody who has a good relationship with them.

LS Co-od2: it would...make sense to use that learning support worker because it means that the student is kind of relaxed...rather than me or a complete stranger...the answers you would get it would be completely different (61 – 63)

LS Co-od2 explained that ensuring the learner feels listened to is reliant on the skills of the person asking the questions.

Learners who are new to the college have additional input to explain the purpose of the AR and prepare them for it. LS Co-od2 explained that it is not possible to prepare learners for the specifics of the meetings, such as when they will speak or how long they will be in the meeting.

- **Decision-making**

Outcomes were created by updating the old outcomes, for example by building on the progress made or if they have been achieved. LS Co-od2 explained that the learners have to agree to any outcomes which are set.

The learners never suggested their own outcomes. LS Co—od2 reflected that this was an interesting point but explained that it might be difficult for some learners, particularly those in the SEND department, as it might be too difficult for them to see how the outcomes relate to achieving their goals and aspirations.

- **Impact of the learner's anxieties**

LS Co-od2 explained that the AR meeting can be too intimidating for some learners and so they do not attend. In these circumstance, an LSW will meet with them beforehand to gather their views. LS Co-od2 explained some learners find it difficult to talk about themselves or sensitive topics in front

others, and therefore the preparation stages with the staff they feel comfortable with are essential for eliciting the learners' true thoughts and feelings.

LS Co-od2: ...lots of students don't really want to talk about themselves anyway let alone...in the context of their parents and there's a tutor and there's a doctor... (323 – 324)

- **Ongoing impact of the AR**

LS Co-od2 did not feel the learners would be aware of any direct impact of the AR meetings on their support. Unless the EHCP is ceased or there is a change which requires additional funding from the LA, the learners are unlikely to notice any changes, as they will still receive support regardless of the AR meeting.

LS Co-od2 thought that that the learners felt listened to throughout the AR process but he reflected that there is a difference between them feeling listened to and feeling that their voice has an impact on their support.

ARs: an opportunity for working collaboratively

LS Co-od2 listed several professionals and non-professionals who have involvement with the learners and are invited to the AR meetings. Not everyone who is invited attends. He explained that the meetings provide a good opportunity to get as much information as possible from everyone involved and have open discussions to inform the planning of the support.

LS Co-od3

Four main themes were found within the interview with LS Co-od3. Subthemes were found within all the main themes:

Roles of the LS Co-od

- **Co-ordinating processes and collaborative working**
- **Facilitating the involvement, autonomy and voice of the learner**

Challenges of learner's engagement with their EHCP and the AR process

- **Lack of clarity, knowledge and use of the EHCP and AR**
- **Difficulties with answering the 'Five Years' Time' questions**
- **Issues with LA processes**
- **Negative perceptions of the EHCP**

Learner autonomy

- Influence of the parents
- Influence of the learner
- Influence of the skills and practice of individual staff

Features of a successful AR

- Current practice
- Suggestions for improvements

Roles of the LS Co-od

- **Co-ordinating processes and collaborative working**

The role of the LS Co-od was to gather and collate feedback from everyone who had been involved with the learner (e.g. parents/carers, tutors, external professionals and agencies); chair the meetings; type up the notes from the meeting and give them to the administrator to send to the LA; and action any action points. Throughout the year, she liaised with staff to gather information about the learner and their progress to inform her decision-making around who to invite.

- **Facilitating the involvement, autonomy and voice of the learner**

Another main part of LS Co-od3's role was to facilitate the involvement of the learner in the AR process, and ensure they were listened to and their views included.

This started in the preparation stages when the learner was asked if there was anyone they would like to invite to the meeting. In her department, LS Co-od3 met with the learners to complete the Student Feedback form. This was not always possible due to the large number of ARs she had to co-ordinate (32 learners). As an alternative, learners who she knew were likely to be more comfortable in the meetings would have their views sought during the meeting instead of beforehand.

LS Co-od3 explained she acted as an "advocate" of the learner's perspective and choices, and would "re-centre" the attention of the meeting back to the learner when necessary. Attendees sometimes pushed their ideas and focused on what *they* thought the learner needed to achieve in order to become a "fully functioning adult" (line 393). LS Co-od3 adopted the approach of considering 'what is important *to* the learner' as well as 'what is important *for* the learner' to help focus on the learner.

Challenges of learner's engagement with their EHCP and the AR process

○ Lack of clarity, knowledge and impact of the EHCP and AR

LS Co-od3 explained that often the learners did not know about their EHCPs, did not know what their outcomes were or understood the purpose or importance of their EHCP and the AR process.

LS Co-od3: I've read out an outcome, students have gone "I've never heard that before" ... "I didn't even know I was meant to be working towards that" ... "I don't even know what my EHCP is" (216 – 221)

LS Co-od3: ...I feel like the purpose of the EHCP is still quite ambiguous...(459)

Learners' lack of familiarity with the paperwork and the ambiguity of the purpose and role of the EHCP contributed to the AR being overwhelming process.

LS Co-od3 explained that unless specific, concrete actions occur as a result of the AR, nothing really changes following the meeting. Any tangible results that do occur are dependent on individual staff practice and motivations.

○ Difficulties answering the 'Five-Years' Time' question

LS Co-od3 explained that the question which asks the learner what they would like to be doing in five years' time was often difficult for them to answer. This can be due to the learner's cognitive ability, and also because it could be challenging for anyone.

LS Co-od3:...I know students don't even know what they want to do this afternoon let alone in five years' time (335 – 336)

○ Issues with LA processes

LS Co-od3 explained that the impact and importance of the AR and the learner's EHCP is reduced by issues within LA processes. Often paperwork was not sent back within set timescales and the delays could result in people forgetting what they were meant to do. Changes to the EHCPs were often not made which led to them being up to 10 years out of date. Consequently, the learners became confused about the purpose of the EHCP and the AR process, and how it was relevant to them.

LS Co-od3: the students sit there and go this doesn't even represent me anymore it's not even me (474)

- **Negative perceptions of the EHCP**

Some learners were reluctant to engage with the AR process due to the stigma attached to having an EHCP.

LS Co-od3: ...they see like the EHCP as really...negative...and they see it...as something with like a stigma attached to it...so they just don't want anything to do with it (688 – 692)

Learner autonomy

- **Influence of the parents**

The influence of the parents varied depending on the situation and the learner. For some learners, they exercised their rights post 16 and 18 and preferred to make decisions without their parents. In such cases, family friction was often a factor for wanting more independence.

LS Co-od3:...I've had some students say that they don't want their parents there...and most of the time this has been because...there's family friction (88 – 90)

In other cases, LS Co-od3 described how learners and their parents have differing views on the purpose of the EHCP. This can lead to upset and angst, such as when one learner ceased his EHCP because he no longer felt it necessary to have one but his parents felt he would not have the support he needed without the funding.

For others, the presence of their parents at the AR meeting reduced their ability to give their views due to the parents focusing on their own views and wishes.

Parental pressure could also inhibit the learner from voicing their true thoughts and feelings, either through fear, or through love and respect for their parents and a feeling that they should do what their parents thought was best.

- **Influence of the learner**

LS Co-od3 explained how some learners viewed their needs and differences positively and were interested in learning more about them. Some learners had been keen to talk to the college staff and their peers about their differences, and had created presentations which include how to support them.

LS Co-od3: some students will embrace it and they want to share...the different ways that they learn (533 – 534)

- **Influence of the skills and practice of individual staff**

The promotion of the learner voice and autonomy in the college appeared to be driven by the skills and motivations of individual members of staff, rather than training or a coherent, college wide system. LS Co-od3's person-centred approach was guided by her own skills, values and experience.

LS Co-od3:...I wouldn't say that it's on any of the paperwork...my approach to the meeting would be very person centred...but I'm not sure that...any others who attend would see it that way (236 – 238)

LS Co-od3 had learnt of the person-centred planning phrases 'Important to' and 'Important for' (<http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/>) from observing and working with external professionals. Other examples in which the learners' voices were promoted seemed to occur only within specific departments or with certain member of staff.

Features of a successful AR

LS Co-od3 talked about several aspects of the college's AR process which worked well and gave suggestions for how they could be improved further.

- **Current practice**

LS Co-od3 felt that the question on the 'Pathway Plan' (see Appendix 10) which encouraged the learners to identify and name people who would be able to help them achieve their goals and aspirations was a beneficial question. The AR meetings are long which is essential for allowing enough time for all the information to be shared and discussed. Being fully prepared for the meeting and gathering people's views in advance of the meeting was important, as was being able to share these views with everyone during the meeting. Ensuring the learner felt relaxed so that they are able to speak up is something LS Co-od3 aimed to achieve. The refocusing of attendees' attention onto the learner was also listed as a strength of the AR meetings.

- **Suggestions for improvements**

LS Co-od3 felt that enabling the learner to present their thoughts and ideas using their preferred method for communication would improve the AR process. A one-page profile could be created and shared with everyone at the start of the meeting so that the learner's needs and preferences were

immediately known and understood. Finally, LS Co-od3 suggested that a brief could be shared at the start of the meeting outlining the purpose of the AR, to ensure the focus of attention is on the learner.

LS Co-od3: I think maybe having like a brief at the beginning...about what the point of the meeting is and...could be read out maybe...it immediately focuses everyone's attention to the young person (499 – 503)

Research Question 3
How do learning support co-ordinators elicit and use the learner's voice to inform the Annual Review process?
<p>Summary of Findings</p> <p>Roles in the AR Process</p> <p>All three LS Co-ods described their role as co-ordinating the AR process from start to finish and supporting the learners' involvement. This involved gathering feedback from the learners and everyone involved, preparing the paperwork for the meeting, chairing the meeting, typing up the paperwork afterwards and ensuring it is sent to the LA, and making sure any actions are carried out. When planning the meeting, LS Co-ods lead the decision making regarding the attendees of the meeting. Only LS Co-od3 spoke of explicitly asking the learners who they would like to attend the meeting. The two LS Co-ods working in the SEND Department explained that either they, or somebody who has a good relationship with the learner, will meet with them to gather their feedback. LS Co-od3 carries out this part of the process unless she is unable to due to time and the volume of learners within her department, in which case she will gather their views during the meeting. The LS Co-ods all spoke about being an 'advocate' for the learner's voice and ensuring they are included in decision making. Listening and interpretation skills are essential.</p> <p>Autonomy of the learner</p> <p>Learners who have a positive perception of their difficulties, are more confident or are more able are more likely to have a greater role in the AR process, for example by chairing the meetings. LS Co-od2 discussed how a learner's cognitive ability impacts their ability to suggest their own outcomes. A learner's autonomy may be hindered by a lack of parental support from parents or the learner not wanting to disagree with their parents due to fear or love (as described by two LS Co-ods). The learners' awareness of their changing rights at the ages of 16 and 18 varied. learners are more likely to know and exercise their rights if they are more able, have needed less support and have been exposed to a greater variety and ability of learners (LS Co-od1). Learners who have difficult relationships with their families are more likely to invoke their rights and be autonomous</p>

(LS Co-od3). All three LS Co-od explained that all outcomes have to be agreed by the learners before signing them off.

Anxieties of the learner

All three LS Co-ods discussed aspects of the AR process which create anxiety in the learners. For example, not fully understanding the purpose of the EHCP and AR process; having to attend a meeting with a range of people they may or may not know; learner's perceptions of the EHCP and the stigma attached; or having to talk about sensitive subjects. Such anxieties impact the learner's ability to engage in the process and speak openly and honestly. LS Co-ods 1 and 2 identified that learners need to meet with someone they feel comfortable with when completing the Student Feedback form. All three discussed the importance of ensuring the learner feels comfortable in the meeting.

EHCPs and ARs: Issues of relevance, ownership and impact

All three LS Co-ods discussed issues which devalue EHCPs and the AR process, and the learners' ability to 'own' and make use of their support plan. Issues within the LA meant that AR paperwork is not returned within set timescales which impacts the learners' support. Often changes to EHCPs are not made which means they are out of date, ineffective for informing support and no longer represent the learners, resulting in disengagement and confusion about their purpose and the AR process. Two of the LS Co-ods discussed has issues regarding a lack of standardisation and guidance from legislation has resulted in inconsistencies in practice and paperwork across LAs, creating additional challenges for the college to manage. Issues within college included the outcomes not being referred to regularly. The LS Co-ods explained that the learners are unlikely to notice any changes to the support they receive, unless there are any specific interventions or programmes implemented.

Person-Centred Planning

When asked about Person Centred Planning (PCP), all three LS Co-ods discussed how their individual practice is driven by their belief in supporting the learner's goals and aspirations and ensuring the process and decision making is informed by the learner. They gave examples of PCP type approaches being used within certain departments and for other activities unrelated to the AR process. However, there was no agreed definition for the term PCP within the college, nor were there any specific processes or tools used for PCP.

Appendix 17: Thematic Analysis of interviews

This Appendix includes an explanation of the key decisions made for the thematic analysis of the interviews, an explanation of the six phases of Clarke and Braun's (2006) approach to Thematic Analysis, and an explanation of the steps taken for the analysis of the data for this study.

Key decisions for the thematic analysis of the interviews

Inductive Analysis

Braun and Clarke (2006) distinguish between taking a 'theoretical' or 'inductive' approach to thematic analysis. The theoretical approach is driven by the research questions. An 'inductive' (bottom up) approach searches for any themes occurring in the data, and which may not be linked to the research questions or the theory underpinning a study (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Patton, 1990). Although initial codes identified in the transcripts of the present research were placed within tables alongside the research questions that they related to (see USB stick), suggesting a 'theoretical' approach to the analysis, due to the constructivist and interpretative approach of the study (as described in the Methodology chapter), an inductive approach was taken (Braun and Clarke, 2006) when creating these codes. This was to allow for topics of discussions and salient points raised by the participants to be illuminated and included, regardless of their specific links to the research question. A greater understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives could then be gained.

Latent and Semantic themes

Braun and Clarke (2006) discuss the difference between 'semantic' and 'latent' themes found using thematic analysis. Semantic themes are concerned with the "surface meanings" (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 84) in the data. They are themes which are explicitly discussed in the transcripts and based on exactly what has been said. Latent themes look for underlying meanings to what has been said and potential patterns and reasons behind the answers. The present research looked predominantly for latent themes within the interviews in order to understand the perspectives and experiences of the participants. However, semantic themes were also looked for across all sources of evidence in order to understand the specific processes employed by the college to carry out the ARs.

Six Phases of Thematic Analysis

Braun and Clarke (2006) recommend carrying out thematic analysis via a six stage process:

- 1- *Familiarising yourself with your data*
- 2- *Generating initial codes*

- 3- *Searching for themes*
- 4- *Reviewing themes*
- 5- *Defining and naming themes*
- 6- *Producing the report*

(Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 87)

Thematic Analysis of the data for the study using Clarke and Braun's (2006) approach

All transcripts, coding tables, candidate theme tables and the tables for the final themes can be found with the attached USB memory stick (Files 1 – 4).

Phase 1:

Familiarisation of the transcripts occurred initially through the process of transcribing the interviews, then reading through the transcripts and making general notes and observations (see File No.1 USB stick).

Phase 2:

Initial codes for the data were then created by re-reading the transcripts, identifying 'sections' of the text which encompassed particular topics or subjects, and creating codes for each section of the text. All coding tables for each of the transcripts can be found in File No. 2 USB stick.

Example: Coding of Jane's interview:

Line Number	Research Question	Code/Summary of section
17 – 23	RQ1) What are learners' (with EHCPs) perceptions and experiences of the annual review process? e.g. how they were prepared for it? Were you asked who you might like to attend?	Jane does not remember a specific time that the college spoke to her about ARs Purpose of ARs: check progress, how staff can support her to move on to what she wants to do next/in the future, how staff can support her better, if she is "doing well"

Phase 3:

Codes for each of the transcripts were then organised and grouped into 'candidate themes' (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The purpose of the candidate themes was to begin to identify the main themes of the data. See File No. 3 USB stick.

Example: Candidate themes for Jane's interview:

Line numbers	Research Question	Codes/Summary of section	Themes
17 – 23	RQ1) What are learners' (with EHCPs) perceptions and experiences of the annual review process? e.g. how they were prepared for it? Were you asked who you might like to attend?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jane does not remember a specific time that the college spoke to her about ARs Purpose of ARs: check progress, how staff can support her to move on to what she wants to do next/in the future, how staff can support her better, if she is "doing well" 	Preparation Purpose of ARs

Phase 4:

The candidate themes were reviewed by reading through the transcripts again and checking the candidate themes. Handwritten notes were written beside the candidate themes to start grouping them into main themes.

Phase 5:

Main themes were identified by once again reading through the scripts, checking the candidate themes and deciding upon main themes in which the candidate themes were grouped. When deciding upon the main themes, it was necessary to organise some of the content into subthemes. The main themes and subthemes were finalised and a table was drawn up to record and present the supporting candidate theme, codes and quotes. All tables for the final themes for each interview can be found I File No. 4 USB stick.

Example: Final themes for Jane's interview

Theme		Candidate themes	Codes	Quotes
Overarching theme: Authenticity	Subtheme: Preparation	Preparation Preparation for the AR: Lack of consistency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jane does not remember a specific time that the college spoke to her about ARs AR preparation is inconsistent Previous AR prep involved a one to one meeting with the LS Co-od 3 going through the questions on the student feedback from Current years' AR prep involved paperwork being sent home The forms were addressed to her mother and Jane 	<p>46 – 47) J: she erm last year there were like the first year I had one she sat in like she sat in a room with me and like ans asked some questions so she could mention that in the annual review</p> <p>(55 – 60) P: and this year did she do anything with you again this year</p> <p>J: no P: ok J: she just sent it off to my mum P: ah J: and then my mum had to fill it in</p>

Following the thematic analysis of each individual interview, themes which occurred across all four interviews of each group of participants were identified.

Phase 6

Themes for each individual interview were written up and presented in Chapter 4, 'Findings'. At the end of each group of participants, the common themes which occur across that group of participants is presented within a table called 'Summary of findings'.

Appendix 18: Description of Observations

'Attendees' of the meetings includes all participants such as the learners, college staff, parents and carers and anybody else attending the meeting. As the observer of the meeting, I am not included in this title, although I am part of the meeting, interacted with the participants and I was asked to sign the AR paperwork on one occasion.

Jane's AR

Date: January 2019 Time: 1.30pm Location: Jane's College campus (Campus 1)

The meeting was led by the LS Co-od3 and attended by Jane's mother, her tutor and her LSW. The meeting started with an explanation of the structure of the meeting and clarification of details in sections 1, 2 and 3 ('Details of the Young Person'; 'Details of the Young Person's parents/carers' and 'Education Placement Details'). The LS Co-od then asked Jane if it was ok to ask her next set of questions, "What do you value" and "How do you like to communicate". These are not present on the AR document but are similar to the example questions given in section 5, 'My Views, Interests and Aspirations'. Jane was then asked what her aspirations and goals were. After having the wording clarified by her tutor, she listed several ideas. When asked what others say about her, Jane said she did not know and her tutor replied "Fibber". Jane then answered that others say she is supportive but clarified that she is "Not the mother of the class" but if others want her help she will give it. When discussing how she likes to be helped, she was given options and her mother explained that she gets embarrassed. Jane protested that it is not because of this it is because it is "awkward". The LS Co-od asked for any further thoughts and the discussion continued around the ideas Jane brought to the conversation (i.e. presentations to the class are "awkward"; likes team building activities).

The LS Co-od then asked if it was ok to ask the mother some questions for section 6. The mother confirmed that she sent in her response to the college a few days ago (the Friday before the meeting). The form had not yet reached the LS Co-od. Her thoughts and feelings regarding Jane's progress and next steps were discussed.

The LS Co-od then moved onto section 9, 10 and 11 ('My Health Needs', 'My Social Care Needs' and 'Any other changes'). Answers for these sections were discussed. The topic of who Jane can go to for support was raised and a current situation which had occurred in class and affected many of the students was discussed. The tutor and LSW discussed how Learner Services are not the best option as it means Jane has to speak to different people.

The attendees were then directed to page 6 which is section 13: 'Outcomes'. Jane looked unsure when the first outcome was read and her mother explained it further. Her progress was discussed by the tutor and LSW. For outcome 2 which is based on friendships, Jane was unsure if she had met it or not. A discussion around different aspects of this followed and it was suggested by the LS Co-od that it could be potential new outcome. The next outcome was discussed and the LS Co-od concluded with another potential new action regarding the use of a learning Mentor to help with Jane's anxieties. The LSW and tutor then explained why they felt this would not work as it would not be somebody that Jane knows and often the identified person in Learner Services is not available at the time when they are needed. Jane's mother suggested that speaking to the LSW could be a target instead. Jane did not give an answer either way. The final outcome was looked at and the section was concluded.

The LS Co-od then moved back to section 12, 'Pathway Plan'. The questions were directed at Jane and she was able to answer. For some questions, prompts were used to encourage her to give other ideas or more details about what she has said e.g. Where do I see myself in five years' time?:

Jane, "In a house

LS Co-od, "On your own or with anyone?"

Jane, "Probably on my own".

Other ideas were suggested by the tutor and LSW (e.g. "Have a car"; "Have gone around America"; "Have dogs"). The focus was brought back to Jane by asking her if she would like a car. Jane's driving lessons were then discussed. When discussing the advice or guidance she might need for her next steps, the use of a fidget toy was raised and Jane commented that it was taken away from her. Scaling was used to ask Jane how independent she is (out of 10). In summary of the section, the LS Co-od asked if there was anything else Jane would like to work on. Initially Jane shook her head, then the LS Co-od suggested driving and Jane said she would like to be more independent and be able to drive herself to college.

To conclude the meeting, the LS Co-od asked if there was anything else to add or ask and sent the form around to be signed. Jane checked that she needed to sign it. The LS Co-od confirms the time frame for when the paperwork should be completed and sent off.

E's AR

Date: January 2019 Time: 10:30 am Location: E's College campus (Campus 2)

The meeting was led by the LS Co-od 1 and was attended by learner E, her mother and the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Transitions Co-ordinator for a college which E was interested in applying to. A representative from the local authority had been invited to the meeting but did not attend.

At the start of the meeting, the LS Co-od gave E a chance to "settle" by asking if there were any general questions which anybody wanted to ask. E's literacy support was raised as was a question regarding the paperwork from the last AR meeting as there hadn't been any changes made to the EHC Plan. The LS Co-od explained that as there had been no major amendments, there would not be a change to the plan. She also explained that the LA cannot adjust all the forms each time as there are so many and said that the staff know E well and the details on the form would not affect the support E receives. E's mum raised a question about their visit to E's potential next setting (that staff had asked about E's ability) and it was agreed that it would be looked at in more detail later in the meeting.

The meeting then followed the structure of the AR document. The LS Co-od worked through the comments given by her tutors in section 8 and asked if E agreed with what has been said. During this section, the conversation turned to her next steps and the SEND Transitions Co-ordinator from the other college addressed E directly and talked about the courses available and checked details such as her knife skills and her level of needs. E asked what age they cater for. An outcome agreed as a result of the meeting was for E to have support completing the application form. E's literacy skills were discussed as she will need these for the course and E's mother confirmed that she will need support with the academic side of the course. All agreed.

When working through section 12, E replied that she was not sure of her answer to question 1 ('What are my aspirations for when I leave college?') and the LS Co-od offered to report back what E has told her before. E agreed that what the LS Co-od fed back is similar to her thoughts, replying "Something like that". When asked 'Where do I see myself in five years' time?', E was unable to answer: "I don't know, haven't got a clue". E was also unable to answer the question 'How independent am I' and the LS Co-od answered by giving suggestions and checking if E agreed. The LS Co-od then talked to the SEND Transitions Co-ordinator and explained that she needs clear explanations and preparation to help her. She then addressed E directly and said that she is a "good role model" and she has a "caring side". E denied this, saying "No I haven't", "I don't want to be friends". This was suggested as

“something you could build on” and the SEND Transition Co-ordinator agreed that her new setting could be “a fresh start”.

The LS Co-od worked through section 13 by reading out the outcomes and the comments on her progress and then giving her own opinions on E’s progress. E uttered noises of agreement such “mm hmm” and responded to the health and wellbeing outcome, saying that it can be taken off. When asked if she has been attending the gym, E replied “No, why would I?”. The benefits of exercise were discussed and the SEND Transition Co-ordinator is asked if their setting has a gym. He responded that it does but the students cannot be forced to go. E frowned in response to the discussion and the LS Co-od suggested moving on. It was agreed that there were no changes to be made to the outcomes. E commented that they will have to update the front of the paperwork if she moves college as it had the name of her current college on it.

For section 14, E raised the question of money and whether she would receive a bursary at her new college or not. The upcoming change in benefits due to E’s age was discussed (i.e. child benefits will stop) and the LS Co-od suggested that E could get a part-time job. E responded that this would cause “too much stress”. E’s mum responded that they will have a think about it and it was agreed that ‘little steps’ would be taken for the transition.

When concluding the meeting, E was asked if there was anything else she disagrees with. She responded that she didn’t know. The LS Co-od checked if she was happy to sign it. E and everyone at the meeting signed the paperwork. E raised her literacy support, stating that “It’s just past papers” and that it is “45 minutes of waste of time”. It was explained that the sessions are to help her pass the exams and will help her access more courses at the next college. E was given a card with the SEND Transitions Co-ordinators contact details and he explained what will happen next with regards to her application. E’s copies of any paperwork including the new college’s brochure was collected by her mother with E confirming “Yea I don’t want any of it”. The LS Co-od asked a final “Is that alright” and stated to E that she “Tried to make it quick”.

Zac’s AR

Date: January 2019 Time: 10:00am Location: Zac’s college campus (Campus 1; SEND department)

The meeting was led by an LS Co-od who worked within the SEND Department and was standing in for the member of staff who had left. The meeting was attended by learner Zac, Zac’s mother and step-father and another learning support Co-od who was shadowing the LS Co-od leading the meeting. The

meeting followed the structure of the AR paperwork, starting with a clarification of details such as Zac's address and the courses she was enrolled in. These questions (for section 1 – 3 of the paperwork) were confirmed by Zac's mother and step-father. Questions for section were directed at Zac. At the start of this section, the LS Co-od leading the meeting explained that Zac had already been asked these questions previously but they were going to go through them again in the meeting. The answers Zac had given before the meeting were not included on the AR document being used in the meeting. Zac was able to answer the first question about what is important to her. The following questions needed re-wording or examples given. For example, when asked "What are your aspirations and goals?", the LS Co-od first needed to check that Zac understood what the word aspiration meant. She then needed to clarify it further by making it more specific: "What do you want to do after college?". By re-wording or giving examples, Zac answered all the questions except for "What will help me prepare for when I leave college?". Zac was "Not sure", even when the question was re-worded. The LS co-od, her mother and her step-father then discussed possible answers to this, suggesting "Friendly people" and that Zac would happily come to college every day which led to "Routine" being offered by Zac's mother. When Zac was asked if there was anything else that would help, Zac replied "No..might come to me in the week" and said that she would "come back to you (*LS co-od*)" if it did. Section 6 ('My Family's Views') was not talked through in detail. Instead the LS Co-od checked if there was anything that needed adding. Section 7 was summarised. For section 8, 'My Educational Needs', the LS Co-od read through the comments which had been given by Zac's tutors and LSW. Zac commented on her relationship with some of the tutors ("He is funny, makes me laugh"; "I like xx"). Throughout, Zac was asked if she agreed with what had been said. Her mother and step-father were also asked if they agreed with various comments. For section 9 ('My Health Needs'), 10 ('My Social Care Needs') and 11 ('Any other changes'), the questions were directed to Zac's mother and step-father. Section 12 'Pathway Plan' asks questions of the learner. These were directed at Zac and Zac commented on them at the start (e.g. "What are my aspirations for college"; "What are my next steps towards achieving this?"), but as the section went on Zac gave fewer answers. Occasional jokes were made: for example, when asked "Where do I see myself in five years' time?", her mother replied, "looking after mummy" and her step-father replied, "doing the grass". The LS Co-od then redirected the question back to Zac by saying, "That's what they want you to do but what about you?". Zac explained that she would like to have a day off in the week and the LS Co-od clarified this further by asking if she would like to work and/or volunteer. The conversation was then between the LS Co-od, the mother and the step-father. They discussed technicalities of insurance for Zac to work, answered as a joke that she is "independent enough" when Zac was asked about this, and discussed training for transport, that Zac loves buses but that they have concerns about this. The LS co-od said that she would look into this for them. During

section 13, 'My outcomes', the outcomes and comments from Zac's tutors were read through. Questions were asked of Zac which linked to real life. For example, when discussing her maths progress, she was asked what she is like with money. In relation, to her outcome for 'Community Participation', her mother answered initially, saying that she generally spends a lot of time with her family. When asked if there was anything else, Zac replied that she would like to see her friends when she wants to. The steps for enabling this were then discussed. Zac's outcome relating to her health needs (her 4th outcome) were directed at her mother and checked for any changes. Sections 14 ('Personal Budget'), 15 ('Recommendations') and 16 ('Amendments required') were all directed at Zac's mother and then Zac was asked if she agreed with her mother's answers. All were then asked to sign the paperwork and the LS co-od clarified what would happen next: the paperwork would be sent to the local authority and the college would focus on setting up the travel training for Zac. Zac stated to her mother that she needs to sort the bus pass for her and the meeting was concluded.

Pink's AR:

Date: February 2019 Time: 10:00am Location: Pink's college campus (Campus 1; SEND Department)

The meeting was led by the Education Support Manager who was covering for the LS Co-od who had left his post at the end of the previous term. Other attendees of the meeting were learner Pink, Pink's mother and another member of staff who was shadowing the Education Manager as she is training to be a LS Co-od. The meeting started 30 minutes earlier than the original time due to a change in chairperson which meant the observation began 30 minutes into the meeting and the attendees were at section 5 of the paperwork. The structure of the meeting was based on the college's Annual Review paperwork so each question was worked through as it appears in the document. Questions from the paperwork were mostly rephrased to reduce their complexity or worded so that they occurred as part of the conversation (e.g. "What do people like about you?" instead of "What do people like and admire about you?"), or were extended by adding reference to a topic which had already been discussed (e.g. "What helps you at college or at home?" became "What is it that helps you be sociable?" in response to Pink's statement "That's a hard one"). This was as opposed to reading them exactly as they were written. All the questions from the Education Support Manager were directed at Pink. Only on one occasion did Pink redirect a question for her mother to answer for her: "I'll let mum answer that one". Comments from Pink's mother followed any answers or statements which Pink had made. Actions were suggested by the Education Support Manager in response to Pink's answers to the questions being asked.

Appendix 19: Analysis of college documentation

NB:

It is important to note that the total for the numbers recorded for the 'references to' may not equate to the 'No. of times used'. This is because in some instances, if the term 'learner' was used more than once within in a sentence or paragraph which related to the same topic, this was recorded as '1'. For some references, a recording may have been noted for 'EHCP' and 'AR', meaning the value of the term 'learner' being used in references to these two subjects would double. The values given are to provide an overview and are not to be treated as 'exact' values.

Recording units:

- Learner or equivalent term;
- 'Learner voice' or equivalent;

Guidance, Inclusion, Support and Transition Policy (including Appendices)

The document provided an outline of the college's provision for all support, including academic, pastoral, welfare, and transitions to courses and employment. Legislation identified in the document was the 'SEN Code of Practice'.

Recording Unit: Learner	No. of times used: 61
In reference to:	
- Meeting the needs of learners, recognise strengths, and/or exceeding expectations of learners	11
- Guidance and support	17
- Preparation (e.g. for independence, transition)	4
- Plan/planning	3
- Achievement, progressing, succeeding	8
- Monitoring/Reviewing	3
- Working collaboratively/liasing/engaging (with learners)	3
- Empower	3
- Person centred	1
- Safeguard	1
- Learner decision making	1
- Other	1

The college's Local Offer for SEND

The document outlines the college's provision which is specific to Special Educational Needs and Disability.

Recording Unit: Learner	No. of times used: 59
In reference to:	
- Equal access (physical/academic/SEMH/vulnerable/SEND)	4
- Guidance and support	6
- Funding	2
- Working collaboratively/liaising/engaging	2
- EHCP	6
- Learner autonomy (self-referral, seeking support, disclosure of learning need)	3
- Support via LSW	3
- Tutorial time/meetings with tutors	3
- Support via Learning Support Department	1
- Annual Reviews	3
- Reviews (other than AR)	4
- Safeguard	3
- Person centred	1
- Courses	6
- Other	1

Additional notes:

The use of the term 'Person centred approach', although used in reference to planning and monitoring the learner's progress, referred more explicitly to liaising with the parents.

Page 9 of Local Offer:

Person centred approach to planning of transition and progression where we work with parents/ carers and outside agencies to ensure the very best for our learners

LSWs are included in discussions regarding the assessment and monitoring of the learner's progress with tutors.

Learners are invited to the AR

Page 7 of Local Offer:

For learners with EHCPs the learner will be invited to the annual review whereby they will be able to bring a parent/carers or advocate with them if they choose.

LSW referred to 5 times and in relation to: examples of support provided by the college; in relation to the planning of support by liaising with other college staff.

EHCP is referred to 9 times.

AR are referred to 4 times.

'Reviews' in general are talked about 6 times.

Learner Charter

The learner Charter and Codes of Conduct is directed at the learner and therefore refers to 'You' instead of 'learner'. The number of times these terms were used were not counted. Instead, analysis focused on the topics, subjects and references they related to.

Recording Unit: Learner/You	No. of times used:
In reference to:	
- Employment/employability skills	3
- Courses	1
- Assessment of needs	1
- Monitoring of progress/achievement	8
- Support/guidance	1
- Plans/planning/Long term development plan	2
- Safety	1
- Reviews	1
- Learner decision making in planning/consultation of views/representing views	2

Additional notes:

When discussing plans used to support the learner's progress towards their aspirations, goals and academic achievements, a 'Long Term Development Plan' (LTDP) is referred to.

Students' Union is discussed and includes one of the references to 'representing views of the learner'.

Leaflet: Guide to the college's support offer for learners, parents and carers

Again, the document is directed at the learner and so the term 'You' is used instead and is therefore not counted. Topics and subjects discussed are identified only.

Recording Unit: Learner/You	No. of times used:
In reference to:	
- Support and guidance	5
- LSW/additional support in class	3
- Learner Services	2
- Personal tutor /assessor	5
- learner input in discussions re. support	1

‘voice of the learner’ or ‘learner voice’ was not used in any of the college documentation. Collaborating with the learners and working with the learners was discussed throughout the college documentation. ‘Learner’s views’ and ‘representation of learner’s views’ was discussed in the learner Charter and in relation to the Student Union.